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The MUSTANGERS
By Capt. Mayne Reid

There is now no turning, for the three hunters, rapidly closing up, urge them from behind, with shouts and the waving of their flags.

AUTUMN FANCIES

BY MALCOLM TAYLOR, JR.

Not did Fancy, but did Chance he
Drew my heedless footsteps here,
Where, self only, yet not lonely,
Mute I on the waning year.

Neath the umbrage of the foliage,
Scarlet, yellow, brown and eke,
Some weird fancy does entrance me,
Making, like as in a dream,

Leafy clusters, rich in luster,
Like as festal fancies seem
Dancing, leaping, timed-step keeping,
To the music of the stream.

Strange the fancy, leaves do glance, see!
Rainbow hues reflecting bright,
Autumn's glowing richness showing,
Seemingly lively to the sight.

Yet, though shining, they are pining
Neath the touch of dying blight.

This sad fancy does advance free,
Hopes are leaves of golden glow,
That, when living, foster giving,
Serve a cheering light to throw.

But when brightest fell fate smites,
Crushing all beneath the blow.

The Mustangers:

A TALE OF THE CROSS TIMBERS.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

AUTHOR OF "HEADLESS HORSEMAN," "SCALP-HUNTERS," "LOVE RANCH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE MUSTANG-DRIVE.

A DROVE of wild horses, numbering over an hundred head. Of all colors—jet-black and snow-white; bay, sorrel and roan; steel-gray and spotted. They are moving across a prairie—a Texan prairie—near the eastern edge of the "Lower Cross-Timbers," along the side of a stream that, some ten miles below, becomes tributary to the Trinity river. The banks of the stream are steep and sheer, and the current between runs strong and swift. On that side it guides the course of the *cavallada*; for the horses will not dare to cross it. On their other flank is the prairie, smooth and open. At intervals they turn their heads toward it, as if desirous of betaking themselves in that direction. Something restrains them; and they continue on down the bank of the stream.

A traveler, coming suddenly within sight of this herd, would be struck with a singularity in their appearance and movements. Instead of scouring the plain at a canter, or quick gallop—as is their wont—they are moving at a slow pace. Now and then it livens into a trot, or, at times, a brisker walk, as though flies were urging them on. But soon they subside into the old, lagging gait, going on with apparent reluctance.

Under ordinary circumstances, wild horses, when encountered on the prairie, are seen either at rest or in full career—rearing and cowering, with heads erect,

curved necks, and tails sweeping horizontally behind them. The behavior of the *cavallada* in question is altogether different. There is not a curving neck or raised tail among them. On the contrary, their heads are down and drooping; their eyes dull; their flanks hollow, and their limbs dragging after them, as if each and all had been just loosened out of harness, after a prolonged spell of plowing. They look tired, jaded, dejected. They look as if they were being driven.

And this is just what they are—their drivers appearing in the form of three horsemen, coming up behind, at wide distances apart. Not horsemen, either, for the men thus mentioned are mounted on large, strong mules.

To a novice on the Texan prairies, this tableau would appear strange. On first viewing it, he could not give credence to his senses. A herd of wild horses—the wildest and slickest animals in existence—driven tamely along by three men mounted upon mules—slow mules, from which, at a single dash, they might escape; and over their own uninclosed, illimitable pastures, where they might retreat to any distance, even beyond the range of vision and the danger of pursuit. It would, indeed, seem incredible. But the explanation is easy.

The men coming behind are *mustangers*—hunters of the wild horse by profession. They know all his haunts and habits, and can make him their captive without using either the rifle or lasso. They have long marked the herd they are now following, and made themselves acquainted with its habitat—its "range" of pasturing, and its places for watering. On a given day they have started it in full chase, themselves following slowly after, each leading two spare mules. The wild horse, when first pursued, does not retreat in a direct line, but in wide, sweeping circles, returning again near to its point of departure. Sometimes he does not even go out of sight, but gallops back, as if moved by a spirit of defiance, or yielding to curiosity. In this way he soon fatigues himself, making fifty miles while the pursuer may have to travel only ten.

The mustanger, husbanding the strength of his animals, by his provident relays, soon overhauls the herd, starting it off into a fresh run. Again he takes the shorter diagonal, and again comes up with it—repeating the movement until the wild steeds begin to lose spirit under the implacable pursuit. They are, by this time, beginning to feel fatigued, after having made so many idle and out-of-the-way courses. They are getting hungry, too, in their haste not having been permitted to pasture. They will be thirsty also, and, perhaps, make a break for some distant watering-place, well known to the mustanger, who follows them at his best speed, generally taking a shorter route than they. He sometimes arrives in time to hinder them from drinking, but always to prevent their browsing—or, at least, filling their bellies.

Once more the pursuit is continued, though now in a more direct line, for the steeds are tired, and have no relish for scampering. They are hungry, too, and try to graze as they move onward. But they are not permitted. While grasping at the herbage beneath their feet, they hear the relentless pursuers behind, who make themselves heard in time, and the grass remains uncrushed.

Night comes on. Still, this brings no relief to them—no cessation to that never-ending, never-tiring pursuit. All night long are they compelled to move on, without a moment of rest, and scarce a morsel of food. And when day again breaks over the broad prairie, the hunters are there behind them!

During the whole of another day, and often throughout another night, are they thus forced along. Hungry and thirsting, they have now become jaded and dejected, and can be guided in a given direction almost as easily as a herd of tamed cattle. The mustangers know well where to take them, for they have already prepared a place for them. It is a corral, or inclosure, cunningly contrived, and often costing weeks of labor to make it ready. The old Virginia snake-fence, strengthened with posts at every angle, is called into requisition to inclose a tract of many acres, with a pond of water inside, the fence supplemented by a steep river-bank, or the escarpment of a cliff. A funnel-shaped entrance points toward the prairie groves or "islands" of timber—which the wild horse will rarely enter—helping out the extension of the diverging lines.

Once inside the corral, the mustangers easily caught and conquered with the lasso. The process is a cruel one; so much so that the wild horse, ever after, at sight of a rawhide rope, will come to hand, and stand trembling before his tamer.

It is a capture of this kind, that is taking place on the banks of the stream leading to the Trinity. It is near its completion, as can be told by the dragging gait of the horses, and their thoroughly submissive demeanor; as also by the gestures of the men behind, every moment growing more earnest and impressive.

In front, there is a *motte*, or island of timber, standing about a hundred yards from the bank of the stream; leaving a space of open prairie between. Toward this opening they are directing the drove; as if to drive them through it.

Again the wild horses make halt. They seem to have suspicions about entering upon such a narrow defile; and show signs of making a break for the outer prairie. But, from that side, they see two of their pursuers approaching, each waving a little flag, with which he is provided. In despair, they turn toward the stream; and striking into a slow trot, continue on between the wood and the water.

Once beyond the timber, a fence of strong rails, laid zigzag, flanks them on the side

of the prairie; and they are driven on, between it and the steep bank. There is now no turning, for the three hunters, rapidly closing up, urge them from behind, with shouts and the waving of their flags.

The fence converges toward the bank, and the passage becomes so narrow, that the *cavallada* gets crowded. But there is an open country beyond; and making through this, they once more break into a feeble gallop, in hopes of at last escaping from their relentless pursuers. Two or three hundred yards, and they only bring their breasts in contact with an obstruction—that same crooked arrangement of split timbers, that has already perplexed them. They press their counters against it; but it is strong, and will not yield. They run around it, neighing wildly. They find no outlet on any side. If they return to that by which they entered, they will find none there; for the mustangers have, in the mean time, dismounted from their mules, and from a pile of rails—placed there for the purpose—have completed the inclosure of the corral.

CHAPTER II.

CHOOSING A SITE.

"HALT!"

The command came from a tall, military-looking man, of middle age, mounted upon a horse, that in size corresponded to him. It was not addressed to soldiers, but simply to the negro driver of a Conestoga wagon; which, drawn by four large mules, was slowly making its way along the smooth level of the prairie.

Colonel William Magoffin was the name of the man who gave the order. Had he been only Mr. Magoffin, he would have said "pull up;" but, being a veteran officer of the Jackson wars, his military habits still adhered to him—along with some of the language to which soldiers are accustomed.

At a sonorous "wo-ha!" from their sable teamster, the mules instantly came to a stand—as did also a similar wagon in its rear, and a "Dearborn," drawn by a pair of light, wiry horses. Two other horsemen, who rode alongside the wagon, halted at the same time; and, soon after, six black pedestrians, driving about a dozen head of cattle, came up in the rear of all.

The spectacle thus presented was one not uncommon upon the prairies—being that of an emigrant party on its way to a new settlement.

However, it was very uncommon—in fact, had never before been seen—in the district where the wagons were now drawn up; for those of Colonel Magoffin were the first whose white tilts had ever gleamed amid the green leaves of these singular groves, known as the "Cross Timbers" of Texas.

That this emigrant party came from some Southern State was evinced by the black teamsters; and also, the sable pedestrians tending the cattle in the rear. A glance under the canvas of the leading wagon

brought to view several female faces, of various hue, ranging from pale saffron to ebony black; and beside them, half a score other faces of smaller size, betokening the usual accompaniment of "picninnies."

In the "Dearborn" were two young girls, both fair and white—ladies, at a glance. Of the horsemen, one was a man of large frame, and tall as the colonel himself—though his coarser garb, and generally more rugged exterior, bespoke him only a retainer. The other, a young man, who had seen his twentieth year, in his features showed some family resemblance—enough to be taken for his nephew; and such, in reality, he was.

The two female occupants of the traveling-carriage were the colonel's daughter, Tennessee, and niece, Louisiana. The names may sound strange thus bestowed. It is not an uncommon practice, for, among families in the Southern States west, as in the Southern States east, we find young ladies called "Carolina," "Virginia," and even "Florida."

Colonel Magoffin was an old-stock Tennessean, whose father had come into the country with the Robertsons, Bradfords and Hardings; hence the name patriotically given to his bright, fair-haired daughter. His nephew and niece were the children of a sister, who had found a husband and a home further south, in the lovely land of Louisiana. This will explain the darker complexion and more delicate features of the young Creole girl, who called Tennessee Magoffin her cousin; and whose own name in full was Louisiana Dupre.

Despite the variety of individuals composing the emigrant party, there was sufficient homogeneity to show that it was one family, of which Colonel Magoffin was the head.

The spot where they had halted was a level plain, with a gentle declivity toward the south; and a surface that looked more like a grand garden of flowers than a stretch of wild, uncultivated prairie. There were copes of timber, standing at some distance apart; for they were still outside the selva of the great grove, known as the Cross Timbers. The copes were the outlying islets that here and there fringe these greater belts of forest-land, extending far across the prairie sea.

"This spot looks like it would do," said the colonel, as soon as the wagons had come to a stop; "I don't see any use in our going further. What do you say, Mr. Strother?"

"Wal," replied the individual thus addressed, who was the tall man, habited in copper-colored homespun, with a rifle of six feet over his left shoulder, "I don't see as you can do any better. Thar's a river, out o' which we can draw any amount of water; and thar's plenty o' ground that needs no clarin'—not the stroke o' an ax. Once we've plowed up them weeds, I guess we'll get good cotton out o' it; and," he continued, looking with increased interest

across the river, "thar on t'other side ar' plenty o' timmer, whar there shed be b'ar and deer—to say nothing about squirrel and turkey. I guess, squire, you can't do better than fo-cote jest whar we've pulled up."

"What do you say, Eugene? The ground looks good for either cotton or tobacco; and I think we're far enough south for sugar. What's your opinion?"

The speaker turned round to his nephew, who, being a Louisianian, was expected to know all about the soil that would be suitable for the sugar-cane. But Eugene had also turned round, and ridden up to the Dearborn, inside of which was something sweeter to his thoughts—his fair cousin, Tennessee.

Baffled, the colonel also approached the wagon, and put the question to all together; how they would like to settle on that spot.

"Charming!" exclaimed the impulsive Tennessee; "we can have splendid bouquets and garlands of flowers—only for the gathering!"

"It is a very beautiful country," simply and quietly remarked her cousin, over whose young face could be detected a shade of melancholy—almost sadness.

"Do you think it will grow sugar, Eugene?" again asked Colonel Magoffin, addressing himself to the elegant young Creole, in sky-blue cotte and Panama hat.

"I don't think it would, uncle," was the discouraging answer; "it's a little too far north. But what matters, so long as you can grow cotton? Remember, a pound of cotton is worth more than one of sugar; and here, I think, the chief question will be about transporting the produce to a market."

"That's so," said the colonel. "Well, it'll give us cotton, sure; and corn for the niggers, and the horses. Till we can raise our own hog-meat, we must live upon venison, with now and then a bear-ham, and a breast of turkey; so that we may be as well off as in the old house in Tennessee."

Magoffin said this with something like a sigh; for he remembered that, in the "old house in Tennessee," he had been surrounded with every comfort, until that time when a too-generous hospitality had brought the bailiff to his gates, and left him almost landless and niggerless. This attenuated state following being all that was left of a plantation counting over two hundred hands. Still the new movement was not disagreeable to him, but rather the reverse. He was of that migratory stock who can not dwell contented, except on the furthest frontier. Originally of the East Tennessee settlement, they had gone on to Nashville, in the center—and thence to Memphis in the west. Here again, the houses had become too thick, and the country too closely fenced around them. Therefore, the colonel—though with the loss of over three-fourths of his property—was glad to escape from the so-called increasing civilization, and seek a home in some land where the first fence-rail had not yet been split. He was to find it in the country of the Cross Timbers; and the spot where his wagons had halted seemed the very place he would have chosen for a home.

He chose it.

CHAPTER III.

A COMRADE SUSPECTED.

"I don't like him, Ed; I don't like him. This chile can't feel a freeze torst that fel-lur—nowhow we can fix it."

"For that matter, Wash, I don't like him myself. But we agreed to his coming out with us."

"Who agreed? Not me—durned ef I did. Jest foctherways. I war all ag'in it. I nether know'd thar fellurs go trappin' or huntin' together, thar thar wa'n't quarrels an' conspirin' among 'em; an' one o' the three war boun' to be in the minority. On the puralra, jest as when you go coortin' a gurl, thar's no kumpany. Remember whar I tolt ye, thar'd be better to 'a' left him behint, an' let him foller his own trail; but you w'd hev him along."

"I admit I spoke in favor of his coming. He wanted so bad to be with us."

"Not so bad to be 'long w' us in particular. Twarn't that. Ef this chile ain't mistook, what he wanted wus war to get clear out o' the settlements—anyhow, an' anywhere. Thar's somethin' ag'in him thar wuss than a due-bill."

"You think so?"

"Sure o'—or next thing to sure. Don't ye recollect, when we wur stayin' in Nacodosh, how fidgety he wur on the arrival o' every party o' emigrants, an' whenever anybody rad up to the tavern? He 'peared to be keepin' a sharp look-out for a bailiff—an' that's jest whar he wur doin', I reckon."

"He may have committed a forgery, you think?"

"He's committed wuss than that, I shed say."

"But what makes you fancy so?"

"I've got my reezuns. Men don't ramble in thar sleep—as I've heern him do, more'n onces—because they've wrote thar name whar they hedn't oughter. My word for it, Ed Thornley, thar's blood on that fellur's hands."

"It's a pity we brought him with us. Even if it isn't as you suspect, the suspicion of it makes me feel unpleasant. Besides, he hasn't turned out much of a cheerful companion. After all, it's getting to be ticklish times between us and these Indians. They don't appear to like our horse-hunting about here; and if we should come to have trouble with them, three rifles would be better than two."

"I don't know 'bout that. They mout, an' they moutn't. Hain't ye noticed how this kumrade o' ours takes on to thet young savage, Tiger-Tail, an' his Seminoles? Ef it warn't for the different color o' thar hides, you mout think they wur a kuppel o' born brothers; while all the time the Injun's been sulky an' ugly w' both o' us. Don't like it a bit. This chile hev heerd o' white rennygades, an' know'd o' some as betrayed thar kumrades to the Injuns. Sech hev been men as hev committed murder in the settlements, and daseen't go back thar. This fellur mout be one o' the kind; an' I feel sort o' sure he ar."

"Still, why should he betray us?"

"Why? Wal, one thing why, we've got a good gatharin' o' hosses now. Our cavayd down among the plantashuns, shed fetch, leaseways, a kuppel o' thousand dollars. We've got enuf to make a trip w' right away. An' yit he ain't a-goin' to the settlements along w' us. I kin tell thet from his talk. He means stayin' out hyar, 'mong the Injuns; an', to git w' in 'em, he mout take a notion to make 'em a present o' our mustangs. They ked trade 'em off as well as we kin."

"In that case, Wash, the sooner we get

off the better. We had best take the horses to Nacogdoches."

"So this chile's been thinkin'; an' I guess I kin tell why you want to go to thet place. Thar's a gurl ye want to see, Ed."

"No, as I assure you; nothin' of the kind. Thank my stars, I'm as free of all such entanglements as you yourself, Wash."

"Wal, that's free enuf. This chile hain't hed a scrape w' weemen since he wur up trappin' 'mong the Crows, an' campin' at Fort Laramie. I hed a squaw thar; an' I swore she shed be the last I'd ever let cling onto me. What w' her fondness for *javaron* an' rot-gut whisky, she ate an' drank up the proceeds o' a hul winter's trappin' on the head-waters o' the Platte. No more squaw wives for me—nor weemen o' any kind."

"Hat ha!" laughed his younger companion. "Well, that's no reason why we shouldn't soon start for the settlements. There are other pleasures there that I know will attract you."

"Thar's the pleasure o' sellin' our hosses, an' gittin' the shiners for 'em. Soon as we've got this last lot tamed to drivin', we'll start right away for the settlements—whether this fellur go w' us or not. He kin take his choice 'bout thet, an' keep his share o' the hosses. He ain't entitled to a third o' them, by rights; for he hain't been no great help to us—tuk up as he's ben w' Tiger-Tail an' his brown-skinned beauties. Wagh! how I do despise any white man that puts hisself on an even w' a Injun!"

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNWELCOME SIGHT.

THE conversation detailed in the preceding chapter occurred between two men, mounted on mules, and riding across an open stretch of prairie. They were two of the *mustangers* described as having made a capture of the wild-horse herd, by driving them into a corral. It was just after they had completed the inclosure; and they were now on their way to the hut that served all three as a home, in order to provide ropes, and other gear, for breaking the wild steeds—as also to obtain a fresh supply of provisions. The third had been left by the corral, to see to the captured stock. It was he who had been the subject of their conversation, and was the object of their suspicions.

Their names were, respectively, Edward Thornley and Washington Carrol—or "Wash," as his comrade called him for short. Between them there was almost as much dissimilarity as could be between any two individuals of the same race, engaged in a common calling. Physically, morally, intellectually, were they unlike one another.

Wash Carrol—the elder—was a small man, thin in face, as in person; dark of complexion; tough as tan leather; and tight as strung wire. Although perfectly honest in all dealings with men of his own color, he was not so just when it was a matter between him and *red-skins*—or even the Church; for, in a religious point of view, Wash—or "Old Wash," as his confederates called him—was something of a sinner. He was not so very old—fifty being about the number of winters he could look back upon. He was by no means of comely aspect, and his countenance—though of a cast that bespoke cunning rather than sinister thought—was not improved by the scar of an old cut, that traversed across his left cheek, from mouth to ear. By birth a Tennesseean, he had been by profession a trapper; but now that beaver "plew" had fallen to so low a price, he had forsaken the trapper's calling, and taken to that of a *mustanger*. He had spent the latter portion of his life upon the prairies of Texas, in pursuit of this singular occupation.

His comrade was a person of totally different characteristics. A handsome young Virginian, he had strayed down to Texas; and, with Wash, had come out to the Cross Timbers—not so much to make money by following the profession of horse-hunter, as through an innate love of frontier-life, and a longing for the adventures that render it attractive, despite its perils and hardships. The present expedition was his first trip up on the prairies. In the romantic old town of Nacogdoches he had made the acquaintance of Carrol; and a bargain of partnership had been struck between them. While preparing to set forth alone, a third individual had presented himself, so earnestly eager to accompany them, that, although the old hunter had at first made objections, his younger and more enthusiastic companion had overruled him, and the stranger-volunteer was accepted.

He was a young man of about the same age as Thornley himself, who gave him the name of Louis Lebar, and said he was from the State of Louisiana. He was the one about whose honesty the two now entertained the suspicions imparted to each other in their conversation. From the first introduction, Wash Carrol had conceived them, and all along felt aversion to the man.

The appearance of Lebar was not in his favor. He was short and thick-set, with shoulders slightly stooping. His complexion was dark as that of a mulatto; and a heavy beard, left to grow at will, made him look still darker. In his eye there was a restlessness, and his glance was, at times, almost wolfish. Carrol's dislike for him had other reasons. He had heard utterances of a compromising kind—mutterings made by the stranger in his sleep—in which occurred the word "murder." Wash, lying awake, and listening, had heard this ominous expression, and drawn from it sinister conclusions.

The two had ceased conversing about him, and were now riding on toward the hut, that for several weeks had served them for a home. It was a rude structure of logs, which they had erected against a rocky bluff, overlooking a branch of the Trinity river—about a mile below the place where they had constructed their corral. They had got near to it, and were riding quickly along the bank of the stream, when Wash—whose eyes were ever on the alert—suddenly jerked up his mule, with the exclamation:

"Look thar!"

"Where?" inquired Thornley.

"Thar, down the bank o' the stream. Don't ye see somethin'?"

"Yes—I see something white, like the canvas of a tent."

"Tent be durned! 'Taint nothin' o' the kind. It's the tilt o' a waggin."

"A wagon! Out there?"

"It ar—dog-gone to it!"

"And if so, why should it displease you to see it?"

"Displease! Durn it, I've been runnin' away from thet sign all o' my life, an' now, I suppose, I've got to fit furrer. I

just made tracks from near Nashville, whar this chile war kitteded, to West Tennessee. Thar I war follered by waggins, an' arter them, hosses. Then on to North Mississippi, whar the waggins an' hosses kin closet arter Choctaw Purchase. I then tried Arkansas, on t'other side. No use. Thar, too, soon appeared the cussed waggins, an' claims, an' cabins—an' 'long w' 'em, frame houses. I put off South, fer Loozyanny, on Red River bottom. More waggins, an' more buildin's. Then, by way o' durnier raysort—as the Loozyanny Creoles calls it—struck out hyar, for Texas. What's the use? Thar's the waggin ag'in—cuss it!"

"True; it is a wagon—or two of them, I think. But, why should you be vexed at the sight o' them? For my part, I feel rather pleased."

"Pleezed! Why? Do you know what them waggins mean?"

"Some party, I presume, traveling over the prairies—perhaps on an exploring expedition."

"On a settlin' expedition! Thet's what they're arter. I kin tell it, by the look o' the hull thing. See yonder! What's them movin' roun' the vehicles? Thar's men on hossback—an' thar's others afoot. An' thar's crows an' children. A party o' emigrants, to a sartinty. I know'd they w'dn't be long, afore they'd find out these Cross Timmer lands—jest the sort fer cotton. Settlers, I'll be boun'; and whar now will go the wild hosses? Ed Thornley, we may as well make up our minds to it. This'll be our last trip o' hoss-huntin' to the Cross Timmers. Take this chile's word for it, in another year thar'll be houses all about hyar—an' towns, too. Durn towns an' houses! Afore eyther o' us goes under, they'll be all over the continent o' Ameriky. A cuss to it! Most as bad as Methodies. Wagh!"

At the commencement of this tirade, the old hunter had pulled up; and, after its conclusion, he sat in his saddle scrutinizing the distant apparition upon the prairie, with a look in which stern indignation seemed strangely commingled with sadness. In that speck of snowy whiteness, which, to other eyes, might have appeared the harbinger of civilization, he saw only a cloud that—in his way of thinking—threatened to throw a blighting shadow over the future—not only of his profession, but his life!

"Dog-gone queer," he exclaimed, after a short while spent in scrutinizing the forms seen moving around the wagon. "Dod-rotted queer, ef them's all thar is o' them. Only two waggins, an' eight or ten men about 'em—most o' 'em niggers, fer ez I kin make out. Some small planter, w' his belongin's, I reckon. An' ef thet's all thet's comin' out to settle hyar, they'll stan' a poor chance w' Tiger Tail an' his ugly los—that is, ef the Injun should take a set ag'in them."

"Perhaps there are other wagons coming on behind," suggested Thornley.

"Ef thar be, they must be a good bit behint. We kin see the purryrie fer ten mile, on the track they're on. Whar's the others? Ain't neery one—not yet the sign o' a critter, on foot or a-hossback. No; them's we see thar, 'pears to be the hull gang. I guess we'd better git foward, an' find out who an' what they ar anyhow."

Saying this, he brought his heels, with a heavy, double kick, against the ribs of his mule, and set the animal in motion toward the spot where the wagons were stopped—his companion spurring up and riding alongside.

(To be continued.)

The Dark Secret: The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON,
(MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING.)

CHAPTER IX.

JACINTO.

"By night the heavy doors are drawn,
The castle stands alone;
But in the chambers, till the dawn,
Unquiet spirits move."

It was a wild cry—a woman's shrill shriek, that had startled them; but looking round, they saw no woman—only the Spanish boy, Jacinto, who came flying toward them, uttering cry after cry, as no boy ever did before. It was an apparition so unlooked-for, so unexpected, that both forgot, for an instant, what was to follow—the one, his imminent danger, and the other, his demonic vengeance; and before either had recovered the boy was standing beside Disbrowe, holding out his arms before him, as if he would have interposed that frail barrier to shield his life.

"Spare him—spare him!" cried the boy, in piercing accents. "Oh, Captain Tempest! for the love of Heaven, spare his life!"

The young Englishman, taking advantage of the momentary confusion, made an attempt to wrest the pistol from his enemy's grasp; but the hawk-like eye of Captain Tempest detected the motion, and quick as lightning he sprang back, took deliberate aim, and fired.

With a mighty shriek of more than mortal anguish, Jacinto had flung his arms around the young guardsman; and with the momentary start the cry gave the ruffian, the ball sped from its aim, and the next instant the right arm of the young Spaniard dropped lifeless by his side, and with a groan he sunk senseless on the ground.

"Villain! demon!" shouted the young man, maddened by the sight. "You have killed him!" And in an instant he had sprung off his horse, and grasped Captain Nick by the throat ere he could draw a second pistol from his belt.

With a fearful oath of mingled rage and disappointment at missing his aim, the captain closed with his adversary, and a deadly struggle ensued. It was a struggle that would not have lasted long, for—though Disbrowe had the advantage of youth and agility—Captain Tempest was a perfect giant in strength, and he had grasped the young man in an iron grasp with one hand, while with the other he tugged at a huge, glistering knife, when he unexpectedly found himself seized from behind by some huge monster, that held him as if he was in a vice, and obliged him to relax his hold.

"Hold him, Lion! hold him, my boy!" exclaimed a spirited voice, at the same moment. "That's a good dog! Now, then—what's all this about?"

Disbrowe looked up, and saw, to his astonishment, no other than Miss Jacquetta De Vere sitting on her horse, and looking on the scene as coolly and composedly as

though it were a little tableau got up for her express amusement. Her horse's hoofs on the soft turf had been noiseless; so they had not heard her approach. Stepping back, Disbrowe took off his hat, and shook back his clustering hair off his flushed face, and glanced around before speaking. Saladin stood snorting and pawing the ground with terror, at a little distance; Jacinto lay on his face senseless at his feet, his coat-sleeve saturated with blood; and Captain Nick Tempest, foaming at the mouth, was struggling furiously in the grasp of a huge, fierce-looking dog—who, with one eye on his mistress, was evidently grimly resolved to hold him while he had a tooth in his head.

"Well," said Jacquetta, after a pause, during which her eye had followed Disbrowe's, "you've been getting yourself into a scrape, I see, my good cousin. You should not have ridden out, you perceive, until I was ready to go along and take care of you. Gussie, easy, my dear sir"—to Captain Nick Tempest, who was writhing and cursing at an awful rate—"don't swear so, and don't struggle in that way; for if the broadcloth gives way, perhaps you won't find Lion's teeth very comfortable, and perhaps I shan't be able to keep him from cheating the hangman, and perhaps I won't try either! What is the matter, cousin Alfred, and who is this lying on the ground? Why, he's wounded! Good heavens! has he been shot?"

She leaped off her horse as she spoke, and bent over Jacinto, as Disbrowe knelt down and raised him in his arms. The beautiful face was cold and still as marble, and the lips were blanched to a deadly whiteness. The wounded arm hung heavy and lifeless by his side, and his head fell over Disbrowe's arm as though he were in reality dead.

"Oh, cousin! is he dead?" cried Jacquetta, falling on her knees beside him.

"Not dead," said Disbrowe, laying his hand on his heart, which still fluttered faintly; "not dead, but in a swoon; and his arm is shattered, I greatly fear."

"Oh, poor boy—poor boy!" said Jacquetta, sorrowfully. "Oh, cousin! who had the heart to do this?"

"That monster there! May Heaven's worst curses light on him!" exclaimed Disbrowe, fiercely.

"Where can we bring him, Jacquetta? Something must be done immediately."

"Bring him to Fontelle—there is no other place where he can be brought, and it is not more than two miles from this. Lift him before you on your horse, and ride fast. But, tell me how it happened. Did this man intend murdering him?"

"No—no. He intended to murder me; and this poor boy, in his effort to save my life, received the ball meant for me," said Disbrowe, as he raised the almost lifeless and limber form in his arms.

"What a beautiful face!" exclaimed Jacquetta, involuntarily—forgetting, for an instant, every thing but the wondrous beauty of the lad.

As she spoke, the boy opened his eyes, and they fell full upon the handsome, troubled face bending over him, and, with a faint exclamation, he attempted to rise; but at the motion a spasm of intense pain shot across his pale face, and shuddering through all his frame, his head dropped heavily on Disbrowe's breast.

"My poor boy!" said Disbrowe, compassionately, "do not attempt to rise. Your arm is broken, I fear; but I will take you where you will be carefully nursed."

"No. Let me go; put me down—I must go," said the boy, wildly, making another attempt to free himself; but his voice was faint and sharp with agony, and his face twitched convulsively with the almost unendurable pain, and once more he sunk back, white and fainting.

Disbrowe's only reply was to place him upon his horse, and then leap into the saddle; while, with a groan that all his efforts could not repress, the poor boy's head dropped heavily on his shoulder.

"What is to be done with this scoundrel who assaulted you?" said Jacquetta. "Shall I order Lion to keep him here till we can return with men to arrest him? Eh?"

Captain Tempest's reply to this proposition was an appalling volley of oaths, as his livid face grew a shade more ghastly, and he shook his clenched fist furiously at Jacquetta in impatient passion.

"No, let him go; let Captain Tempest go," said Jacinto, faintly, lifting his head for an instant, and then dropping it again.

"Let him go, since the lad desires it," said Disbrowe, after a moment's hesitation. "I shall be on my guard for the future, and will not be taken at a disadvantage again."

"Very well," said Jacquetta, as she fearlessly approached the raving savage—"but first, my dear sir, I will trouble you for that pistol. Before Lion lets you off the limits, you must stand and deliver."

Captain Nick furiously buried the pistol at her feet.

"Thank you," said Jacquetta, coolly, as she picked up the weapon and examined it.

"Loaded, I see—all right! Here, Lion—here, my boy; let him go!"

With a sullen growl like his angry namesake, that showed how much against his better judgment he complied, Lion obeyed, and trotted over to the side of his young mistress, still displaying a formidable array of teeth.

"Now, be off at once," shouted Jacquetta, in a high, ringing tone of command, as she raised the pistol and kept her bright eye fixed on the outwitted captain. "Vanish, before I am tempted to give you a dose of cold lead, which I would just as lief do, only I don't want to rob the gallows of its due. Be off!"

Grasping his teeth with impotent passion, the captain obeyed—not knowing how soon the dangerous-looking little desperado might be tempted to fire; and a mocking laugh from Jacquetta came wafted after him on the evening breeze, and was the last sound he heard, as he vanished round the brow of the hill.

"The youth has fainted again," said Disbrowe, anxiously, as Jacquetta, whistling to Lion, stuck the pistol in a belt she wore, and vaulted lightly on her horse.

"So much the better," said Jacquetta. "You can ride rapidly now without fear of hurting him—poor fellow! Come, *en avant!*"

Both spirited horses darted off simultaneously, and in less than fifteen minutes the peaked gables and quaint turrets of Fontelle came in sight.

"Don't alarm the house, but bring him up here," said Jacquetta, as she entered the hall, followed by Disbrowe carrying his insensible burden, "into the room next mine—in here."

She led the way down the long hall, up a flight of stairs, and through another hall leading to the south wing of the building; and throwing open a door, ushered Dis-

browe into a pleasant little room, elegantly furnished in tasteful, modern style.

Disbrowe laid Jacinto on a low French bed, lung with white, scarcely whiter now than his death-like face. Again, as he looked at him, that same unaccountable conviction that he had seen him somewhere before, flashed across his mind.

But Jacquetta, with her usual energetic promptitude, left him little time to ruminate, for no sooner had he laid him down, than she said:

"There! go now and hunt up Frank, and send him off to Green Creek for a doctor. Tell him to be quick, for the sooner this arm is set, the better. Go!"

In spite of himself, Disbrowe could not repress a smile at the young lady's prompt, off-hand, decided way of doing business, but without waiting even to reply, he darted off, leaving Jack De Vere alone with her patient.

He found Frank yawning dreamily over a novel in the parlor; and in a few words told him what had happened, and dispatched him for a physician. Frank's astonishment was unbounded, but he took pains to repress it, and beyond the ejaculation "What?" jerked out of him by the exigency of the case, he said nothing, but clapping his hat on his head, disappeared instantly.

Just as Disbrowe was about to return to the room where he had left Jacinto and his pretty, spirited little nurse, Mr. De Vere came along the hall, and to the great chagrin of his dutiful nephew, called him off to see some improvements he was about to make in the grounds. He made desperate efforts to listen to the questions asked him by his uncle, but answered so much at random, that Mr. De Vere pushed up his spectacles, and looked at him, to see if he had taken leave of his senses. In a few moments the clatter of horses' hoofs, coming up the avenue in front, warned him that Frank was returning, and Disbrowe, unable to remain longer, abruptly turned and walked off, to the utter amazement of Mr. De Vere.

Frank was not alone; a little portly old gentleman, with a bald head and a jolly face, accompanied him, whom Frank introduced as Doctor Simonds.

"Bad case this broken arm," said the little doctor, rubbing his hands joyfully, "rather unpleasant thing. Go ahead, my son, and show me the way. Have a pinch, sir," said the little man, taking a huge pinch of snuff himself, and handing the box to Disbrowe.

"No, thank you," said Disbrowe, politely. "I'll guide you, doctor."

"How did this mishap occur?" said the doctor. "Frank couldn't tell me."

"An accident," said Disbrowe, briefly, as he knocked at the door.

It was opened by Jacquetta, looking strangely pale and agitated.

"Oh, walk in, Doctor Simonds," she said, hurriedly; "but you must not enter, Captain Disbrowe, at least, not yet."

"I may want some one to help me," said the doctor.

"Then I will help you," she said, still keeping her hand on Disbrowe's arm, as if to keep him out. "My dear cousin, oblige me by not coming in just at present."

Disbrowe bowed, and walked off, scarcely knowing whether to be irritated or not at this cavalier mode of treatment. He flung himself into a chair in the front hall, and determined to remain there and waylay the doctor as he came out, and learn from him at least something concerning the patient. Gradually, as he thought of her brusque, independent ways and tones, and cool, determined manner, a smile broke over his handsome face; and he could not help owning that this resolute, careless independence, and the easy grace with which she invested it, became her wonderfully well, as nothing else could have done.

"What a queen she would make!" he thought, as he leaned his head on his hand, and fell into thought. "She would be a second Elizabeth, in all but the cruelty. What a girl it is, to be sure! I wish she were a duchess; I would then be tempted to fall in love with her! If she hadn't red hair—ah, there's the rub! as Hamlet says, I detest red hair, yet it is not absolutely hideous in her; it is soft and glossy as floss silk, and would be beautiful only for the confounded color. I wonder what Earncliffe and Lady Margaret would think of her. By Jove! how she would horrify her ladyship!" And Disbrowe laughed at the thought.

"A penny for your thoughts, monsieur," said a musical voice at his elbow, and looking up he saw Jacquetta herself, with her piercing eyes fixed on his face, and the strangest smile on her lips. "Are they worth it?"

"Yes, *ma belle*, for they were of—you!"

"Oh, then they must have been invaluable! But I tell you what, cousin Alf," said the young lady, adjusting her bracelet, and then holding out her arm to look at the effect, "it's all a waste of ammunition thinking of me, and I wouldn't advise you to continue it. Why don't you ask about our handsome patient?"

"I fancied, perhaps, his exacting nurse would not allow it," said Disbrowe, in a tone of slight pique.

"Oh, I don't mind your inquiring after him, as long as you *only* do that," said Jacquetta, smiling provokingly; "so I will relieve your mind at once, by saying his arm is safely set, and Doctor Simonds says he will do nicely."

her, when Jacquetta laughingly caught him, and held him back.

"There now! Don't be vexed. Where's the use of getting cross," she said, in a soothing tone, as if speaking to a spoiled child.

"I give you my word of honor, as a lady and a De Vere, that you will see him as soon as it is prudent, and you may then go down on your knees, and thank him till all's blue. Meantime, I'll faithfully report to him the terrific pitch of gratitude you've worked yourself up to. There's my hand on it! And now sit down and behave yourself! That pleasant-spoken gentleman who tried to send you to a better world is Captain Nick Tempest—is it not? 'Old Nick,' as they call him?"

"Yes," said Disbrowe, taking a seat beside her.

"Well, who do you think he reminded me of?"

"Can't say—but I know who he reminds me of. He reminds me of—myself!"

"By Jove! my idea to a fraction," said Disbrowe, delightedly, "not that you look alike, but somehow—"

"Yes, but we do look alike, though—I'm certain of it—except that I'm rather better looking, I flatter myself. Haven't we got hair alike, now?"

"Oh! but his is red," said Disbrowe, hesitatingly, "and yours—"

"Is red, too," said Jacquetta.

"Indeed! I thought it was auburn—beautiful auburn," said Disbrowe, in the lazy tone in which he was accustomed to issue little words of fiction.

"Oh, you did—did you?" said Jacquetta; "but then you're only an Englishman, and can't be expected to see till it's far in the day, and then you're not half wide-awake."

"Why, I wouldn't have my hair any other color, on any account. It's a good, high-minded, spirited color, and shows people have a decided will of their own; and then it's nice and showy—none of your dismal blacks, nor faded, sickly yellow, nor neutral browns. No, sir, my hair's red, and I'm proud of it!" said Jacquetta, shaking her flashing curls from her eyes.

"Well, one thing is certain," said Disbrowe, "you are the first De Vere that ever had red hair, within the memory of man."

"And that's another reason why I'm proud of it. It's time there was a change in the family—they have been going on in the old way long enough, goodness knows! The followers of the Silver Star have been keeping up their obsolete notions long enough, and need a little variety."

"And a more bewitching variety they could not have than Miss Jacquetta De Vere," said Disbrowe, softly.

"Humph!" said Jacquetta, with a peculiar smile. "Let's change the subject. Are you fond of singing, cousin Alfred? I wish you would sing 'Hear me, Norma.' It is a pretty song."

He half sprang from his seat, and fixed his eyes on her, as if he would read her very heart. She met his gaze unflinchingly, and again her laughing, gray eyes reminded him of the picture, there was such an immeasurable depth of mockery shining through, and baffling him.

"I heard you whistling it yesterday," she said, carelessly, "and as it is a favorite of mine, I thought perhaps you might favor me now."

"No, I never sing," he said, half-curtly, as he arose again, and began walking up and down.

"Well, I must leave you, then, and return to my patient," she said, rising. "I will see you at the tea-table, and report progress." And, with a smiling wave of her hand, she was gone.

Disbrowe paced up and down the long hall, in deep thought, until the bell rung for the evening meal. There was a half-puzzled, half-angry look on his face; yet now and then, as if in spite of him, his features would relax into a smile, and his last words were, as he turned to join the family: "It's of no use, I can't read the riddle."

"I have a message for you, cousin," said Jacquetta, in a low voice, approaching him when the supper was over.

"Well—I am all attention," said Disbrowe.

"It is from him—you know. He says not to distress yourself over-much with gratitude, as he merely acted as he would have done for any one; and as for your thanks, they will keep, and like gooseberry wine, be all the better for keeping. So make yourself easy, cousin."

"I intend to," said Disbrowe, throwing himself into a chair. "Capital advice, that, and I intend to follow it. Do you know, when I marry I expect to repose on a couch of rose-leaves all day long, and make my wife fan me and sing—"

"Hear me, Norma!" broke in Jacquetta, with a wicked laugh; and Disbrowe colored, and instantly grew silent.

That evening he heard Jacquetta sing for the first time, and a superb voice she had. Augusta, too, sang, and the keys of the piano with a master hand, at her father's desire; but an automaton would have done it with as much life. If she had been made of marble she could not have sat more white, and cold, and still than she sat before them there.

Later that evening, Jacquetta sang an old English ballad, at the earnest solicitation of Disbrowe—an old song, with a sweet, plaintive air—and, lying lazily back, he watched her with half-closed eyes, and listened to the words:

"And when the Christmas tale goes round,
By many a peat fire-side,
The children list and shrink to hear
How Childie of Phymtokedie died."

And then the song goes on to say how the "Old Tor" went a hunting, and how he lost his way on the moor, and of his despair:

"For far and wide the highland lay
One pathless waste of snow,
He paused—the angry heavens above,
The faithful dog below."

"He paused, and soon through all his veins
Life's current rapidly ran,
And heavily a mortal sleep
Came o'er the dying man."

"Yet one dear wish, one tender thought
Came o'er that hunter brave—"

Jacquetta paused, and rose with a laugh. "Well, that's very pretty! Why don't you go on, and let us know what that 'tender thought' was?" said Disbrowe.

"I was just thinking of your getting lost," she replied, "and was afraid you might think the song personal; besides, you have heard enough of old songs, without me singing them to you."

"There are no songs like them," said Disbrowe. "I would rather hear one old ballad than all the Italian songs that ever a prima donna trilled and quavered."

"You think too much of old things," said Jacquetta, half-pettishly. "Old names, and old families, and old houses, and old

songs, all alike. For my part, I believe in modern improvements and new sensations altogether."

"And yet I am certain you would rather bear the old name of De Vere than any other under the sun," said Disbrowe.

With a gesture that was almost fierce in its passionate impetuosity, Jacquetta arose and moved to the other side of the room.

"You are a De Vere, my dear boy, if there ever was one," said his uncle, with a smile, "and will marry a countess, I'll be bound!"

"I don't believe there is a countess living I would marry," said Disbrowe, carelessly.

"And why not, pray? A duchess, then," laughed Mr. De Vere.

"Nor a duchess—unless I was in love with her, and she would have me."

"Two very important considerations," said his uncle. "Then you mean to marry for love?"

"I hope so—if I ever do come to that."

"It's an old-fashioned notion! Is that the reason?" said Jacquetta, with a curling lip.

"Partly. If ever I see a woman, my equal in every way, and we happen to love one another in a decent, quiet, gentlemanly and lady-like sort of fashion, it is probable we will get married, as well as the rest of the world."

"What a fortunate woman she will be!" said Jacquetta, sarcastically. "Have you ever seen her yet, Captain Disbrowe?"

"Can't say, positively," he said carelessly. "I may, and then again I may not, to quote the authority you mentioned some time ago."

"Rather an unsatisfactory answer," said Mr. De Vere. "Now, suppose, my dear Alfred, you fell in love with a girl—damsel, accomplished and lady-like—and the daughter of a peddler, or tailor, or that she loved you—would you marry her?"

"No, sir," said Disbrowe—and his fine face looked cold and proud in the clear light—"no, sir; I never would!"

"Simply because she was not your equal in birth?"

"Yes—for that reason alone, even if I did not fear the scoffs and jeers of the world, or the just indignation of Earncliffe, the proudest peer in England. No, sir," said the young man, resuming his customary careless tone; "I never would marry any one below me in birth, for any consideration."

"Oh, bother your loftiness!" muttered Frank, indignantly. "I wish you had been born in a barn!"

Jacquetta arose, suddenly, and, with a fierce, flashing fire in her eyes, lifted up one arm as if to speak, but a cold, white hand was laid beseechingly on it, and the marble-like face of Lady Augusta interposed.

"Not now, Jacquetta! Oh, Jacquetta, dearest, not now!"

Jacquetta stooped and kissed her, with a softening brow; but the fire was in her eye, and a hot, crimson spot on either cheek, as, with the tread and step of an empress, she passed from the room.

Disbrowe sat confounded. What had he said?—what had he done? A sudden gravity had fallen on all. Augusta sat like a figure of ice, Mr. De Vere looked serious, and Frank was scowling indignantly at him from under his brows.

"My dear uncle," he said, after a pause, "I hope I have not offended Miss De Vere. I most certainly had not the remotest intention of doing so, and am yet ignorant of my fault; for, assuredly, nothing I said can, in the most distant way, apply to her—my equal in every sense of the word."

"You forget you will be a peer of the realm one of these days, when the present Lord Earncliffe kicks the bucket," sneered Frank, "and she will only be Jack De Vere, and 'our American cousin,' and a poor relation."

"Silence, sir!" said Mr. De Vere, sternly, as Disbrowe's face flushed indignantly scarlet. "Do not mind Frank, my dear boy—he has caught Jacquetta's fashion of saying whatever he pleases, and consequently thinks a little too loud sometimes."

"A fashion, it seems, no one else is to have," thought Disbrowe. Then, aloud: "And it is really possible my cousin is so red-hot a republican as to be offended at my thoughtless words?"

"I imagined she would have sympathized with me."

"Jacquetta does not believe in merit being overlooked, because it happened to be born in a hovel; and she has a quick temper, and takes no pains to conceal her feelings on any subject," said Mr. De Vere.

"But, as for her momentary irritation, she will quickly get over that, and meet you to-morrow as blithely as ever. One thing, though, I wish you would remember," added the speaker, with a slight smile:

"Avoid this subject in her presence. It is like applying a match to a powder-magazine. Augusta, my love, you are not looking well—perhaps you had better retire."

Augusta arose in her slow, lifeless way, and, with a slight bend of the head, left the room, followed by Frank. And the Honorable Alfred Disbrowe, dissatisfied with himself and Jacquetta, soon after did the same thing, and felt half-inclined to wish Miss Jacquetta was like her picture, and that the same old smiling look would never change.

"It is such a vulgar thing to see a young girl in a passion! Vulgar—revolting—hideous!" he said, testily, "and for nothing, too. I believe, in my soul, the girl is not a De Vere at all. Got changed in the cradle, or something; only I'm perfectly sure, as it happens, that neither Uncle Robert, nor my lady cousin Augusta, are the sort of folks who believe in adopting other people's children. To be sure, there is that flippant Frank; but then he is one of the family, and has the De Vere face, slightly modified with that of Stubbs—bless the mark!—but Miss Jacquetta—rightly named Jack—has not a single iota of resemblance to any De Vere I ever saw. She is an original—a little flash of lightning in gaiters—a snapdragon—a little flame of fire, remarkably apt to burn the fingers of any one who attempts to handle her. Well, peace to her memory! I must go to sleep."

But Captain Disbrowe did not fall asleep as soon as he thought, but lay awake, tossing restlessly, looking at the picture, thinking of Jacquetta, of his evening's adventure, and of last night's mysterious music. Would it be repeated to-night? He half-hoped it might, for never did mortal listen to such delicious strains as had then greeted his ear.

He slept at last, and, sleeping, he dreamed. Again he was in the lonesome gorge between the hills, and again Captain Nick Tempest and Jacquetta were there. Gradually the air became filled with softest,

sweetest melody—from what quarter no man could tell; and, as it rose and fell in ravishing cadences, he saw, and saw without surprise, too (he remembered that when he awoke), the fair face and graceful form of Jacquetta undergo a frightful transformation. She dropped on her hands, long, black hair waved around her, and, in a moment, she stood changed into the dog *Lion*! And, at the same instant, Captain Nick Tempest was transformed into the image of a lovely lady; and stretching out his arms, with a great cry of "Norma!" he awoke—

awoke to find it not all a dream! The night was far advanced, and the air was filled, as in his dream, with divine music. Such celestial harmony, that it held him entranced, spell-bound, charmed beyond the power of motion, for a time. Then, as it changed and broke into wild, weird, quivering strains, like cries of pain from human lips, he sprang out of bed, dressed rapidly, and, with a desperate impulse upon him to find out whence it came, he descended the stairs and crossed the hall.

The massive hall-door was locked, but the key was inside; and turning it, he stood, the next instant, alone in the solemn beauty of the starlit night. There was a faint young moon that shone in the sky like a broken ring of silver, and by its light, and by that of the high, bright, solemn stars, he rapidly took his way toward the deserted north wing of the building.

A dark, gloomy, dismal pile it looked, as if it were, in very truth, as poor Hood has since sung:

"Under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication."

The old English ivy grew thick and rank around the narrow windows, wrapping it, even when the sun shone, in funeral gloom. All was dark and lonely there, but the strains of music were close at hand, and there no longer remained a doubt but that it came from the interior.

Suddenly, while he watched, a faint, trembling ray of light passed one of the windows. A sudden suspicion shot through his mind of burglars and house-breakers, and a sort of conviction that Captain Tempest or Old Grizzle was in there, flashed upon him. In a twinkling, he had grasped a stout ivy stalk, and holding on to the projecting sill, held himself up and looked in.

It was a female carrying a lamp; but was it Grizzle Howlett? Yes—if she had a small, light, airy figure; a fleet, noiseless footstep; a small, delicate face, and waving, curling hair; if she ever wore a dainty, white wrapper, and had a small, snowy hand, sparkling with rich rings. For one instant, the light of the lamp flashed full on the face of her who bore it, and never fell mortal eye on a face so white, so rigid, with such wild, glistening eyes, and hurried, terrified look.

She passed on—all was darkness again; but the instant she disappeared, the music ceased, not now.

He held on until his hands were tired, and then he sprang down and paced up and down, restlessly, waiting for the re-appearance of that light, till the stars died, one by one, out of the sky, and the chill gray dawn came blue and cold over the distant hills; and still it appeared not. And then he re-entered the house, returned to his bedroom, and threw himself, cold and chilled, in bed—not to sleep, but to wonder what this midnight visit meant. From its place above him, the pictured face smiled upon him still, but with a meaning in its mockery he had never felt before, and with—oh! such a world of derision in its laughing eyes! Sleeping or waking, would he ever forget the look that white face wore?—that look of mingled horror, loathing, and repulsion, that made it, despite its young beauty, ghastly to look upon—that look on the face of—Jacquetta De Vere!

CHAPTER X.

A MYSTERY.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
This agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart will witness me burns."

YE ANCIENT MARINER.

ALL the next day, Jacquetta did not make her appearance; she was in the room with their wounded guest, and had her meals brought up. Mr. De Vere and Augusta had not been told of Disbrowe's adventure with Captain Tempest, and they simply knew that a young stranger had broken his arm, and had been brought to Fontelle by Jacquetta, and that she had constituted herself his nurse. Once, Mr. De Vere had paid a visit to the sick-room, and had returned to tell Disbrowe he found him sitting up talking to Jacquetta, and to marvel at his singular and extraordinary beauty, which was the first thing to strike a beholder, always, on seeing Jacinto. Disbrowe's lip curled as his uncle spoke of the tender care and undying attention of his daughter to the Spanish boy.

"I wonder if this young stranger were humpbacked and peck-marked, if Miss Jacquetta would be so devoted? I wonder how much his handsome face has to do with all this tender watching and affectionate care?" he said, inwardly. "Take care, Miss Jacquetta! Young ladies have fallen in love with young strangers before now, and with less handsome ones than this dark-eyed lad, too, I'll swear! I wonder if the girl ever was in love?" he thought, as he took up a book to while away the tedious hours.

It was the longest day that he ever remembered in his life. He tried to read, and pitched the book from him in disgust; he played chess with his uncle, yawned in his face, and lost every game. Augusta played for him, but when she was done he could not, to save his life, have told whether it was "Old Hundred" or an overture from "Il Trovatore," and the only thing he could find to divert his attention for a moment was a portfolio of drawings, by Jacquetta.

They were like herself—bold, free, and mischievous, and sketched with a dash in its wild scenes they were, too; dismal mountain-gorges yawning darkly between frowning hills, with a lowering sky above, and fussy grass below; glimpses of a troubled, glassy, heaving sea, the black sky frowning on the blacker waters, and on a single lone rock that reared its white, ghastly head far out, a wild, ravenous-looking vulture perched with fierce, flaming eyes, and blood-tinted beak. There was a ship going down, and the blanching faces of drowning men flashed above the inky ocean, their wild eyes glaring in the death-agony; their faces ghastly convulsed until Disbrowe turned away and replaced them with a shudder, half-expecting to hear their repressed shrieks burst from their quivering lips. Storms of lightning and thunder on the mountains, and purple, livid moon; gibbering ghosts in long winding-sheets, rising from yawning graves—all that was dismal, and weird, and un-

earthly, was there, and all bearing tokens of a skillful hand.

"Ugh!" said Disbrowe, replacing them hastily, "it's enough to give me the nightmare for a month to look at those ghastly, weird things. Upon my honor, I believe that girl is uncanny, as the Scotch say; no reasonable Christian, unless suffering agonies of remorse or dyspepsia, could ever fancy such goblin sights. How well she does it, too! What doesn't she do well, though? She rides like an Amazon; she plays and sings like an Italian prima donna; she draws like Salvator Rosa; she nurses like—like herself; and she loves and hates—well, I can't say about that, but I should think she could do both in stunning fashion. I shall begin to feel half-afraid of the night, she is so clever. Heigho! this is an awful slow piece of business, loitering about here. I have a good mind to break my arm, and see if she would nurse me like this. Ten to one she would never come near me, but leave me to the tender mercies of that frigid iceberg, Lady Augusta; for she's as full of streaks as a tulip." And yawning drearily, he sauntered off.

Toward evening, he rode out with Frank for a couple of hours, admired the scenery, took a random shot or two at a bird, and returned to tea, hoping and wishing that he might see Jacquetta. But Jacquetta did not appear; and more disappointed than he would have been willing to acknowledge, he retired, at last. He feared he had angered her, and he wanted a reconciliation. He wondered how she would meet him next; whether with her piquant, saucy smile, or with fiery eyes and burning cheeks, as he had seen her last. But he could not answer the question; for never was an April day half so fickle as she.

That night he lay awake listening and hoping for a repetition of those mysterious music; but he listened and hoped in vain. The silence was undisturbed and unbroken all night long.

"I wonder if I will see her to-day?" was his first thought on awakening; and then he laughed at himself for the restless anxiety he felt for her return. "Certain, Alfred Disbrowe! Take care this red-haired damsel does not captivate you, after all! What is she to you that you should care whether you ever see her again or not? What can she ever be to you more than she is now? Take care, my boy, or you may find yourself in a fix before you know it."

As he entered the breakfast-parlor, he looked eagerly around, but no Jacquetta was to be seen. Mr. De Vere was there, reading some English papers; and Frank sat pulling the ears of his favorite terrier through his fingers. Augusta entered, pale, and cold, and stately, as ever, a few moments after, and acknowledged their salutations by a slight bend of her haughty head, and silently took her place at the head of the table.

"Is Jacquetta not coming down?" said Mr. De Vere, as he took his seat; and, strange to say, Disbrowe's heart gave a sudden bound at the mention of her name.

"No," said Frank, sipping his coffee; "I don't think she will be down at all, to-day. She and that good-looking chap with the broken arm are keeping each other company. She let me in the room yesterday, and I was surprised to see how happy they were together."

A sickening feeling of disappointment came over Disbrowe. Had he seen Jacquetta every day, and every time he chose, it is probable he would have felt perfectly indifferent about it—careless when she came, and whither she went; but now she had spirited herself away, totally neglected him, and devoted herself assiduously to this provokingly handsome stranger, Captain Disbrowe's vanity was wounded; he felt irritated to hear she could laugh and enjoy herself while he was wandering about so lonely and *ennuied*; and more irritated still that she admitted Frank, and kept him out; and so, a little angry, and a good deal jealous, he arose in a decidedly ferocious mood, and half resolved to leave his ungrateful little cousin to her own devices and Spanish lovers, and post back full speed to England again, where young ladies knew how to treat their guests in a Christian fashion. There is many a Disbrowe in the world, quite as inconsistent as he.

He thought better of going to England, however, and ordered his horse, instead, for a gallop across if a country, to exercise the demons of *ennuie* and chagrin. This time he did not fail to take his pistols, and keep his eye about him, and felt, in his present fierce mood, as if it would be rather a relief than otherwise to have a fracas with "Old Nick," to put his stagnating blood in circulation, if for nothing else; and indeed, in his state of mind at that moment, he would have found it rather pleasant than otherwise to shoot somebody.

So he rode on at an exceedingly leisurely pace, looking around him now and then, and trying to make up his mind to hate, detest and abhor this uncivilized cousin of his, and contrasting her in his own mind with the dignified, languid, high-bred Lady Gertrude and Lady Margarets of his acquaintance, and drawing conclusions any thing but flattering to her by the contrast, when the thundering sound of horses' hoofs dashing down the rocks behind him made him turn round, and he beheld the object of his thoughts, mounted on her spirited little black Arabian, sweeping on toward him.

How bright, how charming, how almost beautiful she looked at that moment, all afire with life, and health, and bounding spirits! It flashed across him in an instant, and every pulse gave an electric throb and leap at the sight, as though she had imparted some of her own exultant, joyous life to his languid self.

"A race! a race! a steeple-chase! Come on, cousin Alfred!" she shouted; and as she swept thundering past, she raised her whip and gave his mettled horse a cut that sent him off like an arrow from a bow.

With the ringing "Tally-ho!" of a fox-hunter, she urged both horses on, and away they sped at a dizzy pace. Disbrowe's blood rose, his eye kindled with excitement, and pressing his hat down over his brows, he gathered up the loose reins and forgot every thing but the maddening excitement of the race. On and on they flew, passing rocks, and valleys, and marshes, and moors, and level roads, keeping neck for neck, and each urging their horse to the utmost in their effort to conquer. Away and away, as if winged, over mountain gorges, and chasms, and clefts, and fences, and ditches, taking every thing before them! A look of determined resolution settled on the faces of both, as they sped on, that showed they would never give up while their horses could stand, and with whip and spur, and voice, they dashed madly on, heedless of every thing in their furious career.

Suddenly Disbrowe checked his horse so quickly and sharply that he almost fell back on his haunches, confident that the mad "steeple-chase" was then and there brought to an end.

An immense gorge, an awful precipice yawned before them, full fifty feet deep, and lined with sharp, projecting rocks, at the bottom of which roared a mad, foaming torrent, swollen and resistless by the late spring rains. It was a leap—with all his boldness—he would not take, for a single false step would have hurled him to certain death. He had managed to get a few yards in advance of Jacquetta, and now he looked round to shout his victory, when, to his horror and astonishment, he saw her rein back her horse for the fearful leap, and the next moment, with a high, defiant cry, she had vaulted over the terrible gorge!

"Beat!" she shouted, as she took off her plumed riding-hat and waved it exultingly above her head, "beat! hurrah!"

Disbrowe had sat frozen with horror to his seat, at the mad leap, and saw with a shudder her horse's hind feet graze the very edge of the frightful chasm! But at her victorious shout, the danger was forgotten, and the blood rushed in a torrent to his very temples.

"Ha! ha! A De Vere against a Disbrowe, any day," laughed Jacquetta, on the other side, as she reined up her panting steed. "It's the old story of America against England again, and America is victorious! Hurrah for the stars and stripes! I say, cousin Alfred, how do you find yourself?" And she leaned back and laughed immoderately at his mortified face.

"Conquered," said Disbrowe, taking off his hat and bowing with courtly grace, "but I only imitate the example of all the rest of mankind, in being conquered by you."

"That's very pretty, indeed," said Jacquetta; "but still it doesn't cover the disgrace of being beaten—and by a girl, too. Oh, cousin Alfred! I thought better things of you than this. It is well for your lady-love is not here, to witness your defeat."

"I wish I could induce you to bear that title, my dauntless little cousin," said Disbrowe, gallantly.

"No, thank you. I had rather be excused. I shouldn't admire being a lady-love of any one I could beat so easily," said Jacquetta.

"As you are strong, be merciful," said Disbrowe, riding slowly up to where the chasm narrowed, and leaping across; "but you don't call that an easy victory, do you? One inch further, and where would you be now?"

"In heaven, very likely," said Jacquetta, measuring the distance with her eye. "To tell the truth, it's a leap I wouldn't attempt in my cooler moments; but I forgot every thing in the excitement of the race, and would have taken it even had I been sure of being dashed to the bottom. Who wouldn't prefer death to defeat?" she said, with a flashing eye.

"Well, I, for one," said Disbrowe, in his customary careless tone. "I have an unlimited amount of faith in the old maxim—"

"He that fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day."

"Your countrymen seem to believe unanimously in that," said Jacquetta, with one of her shy, provoking glances; "they ought to have it inscribed under the lion and unicorn, and on all their banners; for it was their motto constantly, until they got their walking-papers from these American shores."

"There was some pretty hard fighting first," said Disbrowe, nettled. "Your American friends didn't have things all their own way, and had a pretty long reckoning to pay, in the end. A set of ragamuffins, fresh from the plow—one-half of them—who hardly knew even what they were fighting for!"

"Didn't they?" said Jacquetta. "That's all you know about it. They fought for God and their country; your friends for—a shilling a day!"

An angry reply rose to Disbrowe's lips, and then remembering he was speaking to a lady, he checked himself, and gave his horse a cut with his whip, that sent him on some yards in advance before he could stop himself. Jacquetta looked after him; and the old tantalizing, malicious smile he had learned to know so well, now curled her pretty lips.

"You'll spoil that fine gray, if you use him like that," she said, as she again joined him; "what did the poor thing do to merit that? You ought to have laid it over my shoulders, instead."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Jacquetta; but really, I forget myself sometimes; and you are—if you'll excuse my saying it—given to saying things not calculated to soothe sensitive minds, and—"

"You're proud, and got a shocking bad temper, and are not used to be talked to in such a fashion," interrupted Jacquetta. "Well, cousin Alf, I've seen people when they had a pain in one place, applying a blister to another, as a counter-irritant; and so, if you will look upon me as a human blister, sent on earth for your special use and benefit, you will be apt sooner to obtain the virtue of resignation, which, together with patience and modesty, are beautiful things in young men. And now, to change the subject, why don't you ask after our young hero of the wounded arm?"

"Because I had given up all hopes of ever hearing or seeing any thing of him again; and knowing he was in good hands, I thought inquiry unnecessary and impertinent," said Disbrowe.

"Ah, well, then I shan't tell you any thing about him. How did you pass the time yesterday?"

"Miss Augusta played for me; I had a game of chess, and rode out in the afternoon, and passed it altogether pleasantly enough. You enjoyed yourself very much, too, with your handsome patient, Frank says. What a fortunate fellow he is, to be sure!"

The meaning tone in which the last words were uttered, made Jacquetta look up, and her face flushed scarlet as she met his knowing eyes. For one instant her eyes flashed fire, and there was a passionate motion of her arm; but the next, as if another thought had struck her, she checked herself and laughed aloud.

"What a far-seeing, clear-sighted thing man is!" she said, scornfully. "Oh, wise young judge! And so you would imply that Jack De Vere has found a patient and lost her heart both together. *Ma foi!* what a thing it is to see through a mill-stone!"

"Not exactly, Miss Jacquetta; for the very serious reason that I very much doubt whether you have a heart at all."

"Because I am insensible to the manifold attractions and fascinations of the Honorable Alfred Disbrowe, and have not fallen down at his feet and worshipped, as so many of my sensible and lovable sex have already done? Is that the reason?" she said, with a short laugh.

"Not at all," said Disbrowe; but it was so near the truth that he had to laugh, too. "You do not suppose I have such an inordinate share of vanity as to imagine I could ever touch your heart?"

"Well, there's no saying. I think it very likely you could stretch your faith even to a pinnacle so absurdly high as that. Men are such a set, composed of vanity and whims, every mother's son of 'em!" said Jacquetta.

"A sweeping assertion, that. And am I set down in that catalogue?" said Disbrowe. "You? Oh, well, I don't know. I haven't taken the trouble to think about it yet," said Jacquetta, in a tone of provoking indifference. "It is probable that if ever I do, such will be my decision. But look there!"—she pointed with her whip—"there is the very Queen of the Kelpies, taking an airing!"

Disbrowe looked, and saw, to his surprise, the little girl Orrie, of the lone house, bounding, flying, leaping, with the agility of a mountain kid, over the rocks—her long, elfish locks unbound, and streaming around her little elfish face with its supernaturally large, bright, glittering black eyes. "Hallo! little Orrie, by all that's startling. Where did that little Whisk of Endor start from? I say, Orrie, Orrie! Come here!"

The little girl heard his shout, and, turning round, shaded her eyes with her hand from the sun, and peered at him; then, with a glad cry of recognition, she darted over the rocks, and in an instant had seized the stirrup, swung herself up before him on his horse, flung her arms around his neck, and gave the astonished and laughing young Englishman a crushing hug.

"Upon my word," said Jacquetta, "an enthusiastic welcome!"

Orrie turned round and peered at Jacquetta, and laughed, and nodded, and clung closer to Disbrowe.

"And so you are glad to see me, Orrie?" said Disbrowe, still laughing. "Where in the world did you drop from on these bare rocks? Not from the sky?"

"Lor, no!" said Orrie, in contempt at the idea. "Old Grizzle whipped me, and I ran off—I always do, when she whips me, the ugly old thing. I shan't go back, either, till it's dark."

"Well, won't she whip you again, then?" said Disbrowe.

"No—Uncle Till won't let her. He'll be there, and he likes me. I wish you would give me a ride on your horse. Will you?"

"Certainly," said Disbrowe, moving on. "Why, Orrie, I thought you had forgotten all about me ere this."

"I guess I hain't," said Orrie, soberly, turning round to give him another kiss, and then clapping her hands to make the horse go faster. "I've been thinking about you ever since. Oh! what a nice horse to go this is!"

"And you have no kindly greeting for me, Orrie?" said Jacquetta. "Is he to receive all your attention?"

"Oh," said Orrie, "everybody says you don't care for anybody, and don't want kisses or nothin'!"

"And so, because I don't care for anybody, no one is to love me?" said Jacquetta, in something so like a sorrowful tone that Disbrowe looked at her, surprised at her heeding the little elf's words.

He spoke to her, but she replied briefly; and for nearly half an hour she rode beside them in silence, and with a sort of dark gloom shadowing her face.

Little Orrie prattled continually, giving Disbrowe occasional embraces to fill up the pauses, until Jacquetta almost coldly suggested their return.

"There now, Orrie, will you be able to find your way back, do you think?" said Disbrowe, as she sprang down in a flying leap.

"Be sure I will," said Orrie. "Good-by. I'll come to see you, some day."

"Thank you," said the young gentleman, laughing.

And the next instant she was bounding and hopping like a blackbird from rock to rock.

The same look of dark gloom still lay on the bright face of Jacquetta, as they turned toward Fontelle; and until half the way was over, she never spoke, save to briefly answer his questions. At last he said:

"You seem strangely out of spirits, my dear cousin. May I ask what is the matter?"

"I am thinking of that child and her words," said Jacquetta. "Somehow, the sight of that little girl always affects me strangely; something in those eerie black eyes of hers almost frightens me. A strange feeling, is it not? I wish you could tell me what it means."

"I wish I could," said Disbrowe. "Perhaps she is your spiritual affinity, whatever that is. Frank says she looks like you."

"Who don't I look like?" said Jacquetta, looking up and breaking into a laugh. "I am the image of Captain Nick Tempest and little Orrie Howlet, and, consequently, a cross between a demon and a goblin. I won't think of it, though; and now, that being gone, let me myself again. I'll race you home, Cousin Alfred, or have you had enough of racing for one while?"

"No—I must have my revenge, and retrieve my wounded honor. So lead off."

With a laugh and a cheer, Jacquetta started, and both galloped on over "brake, bush and scar," at a reckless, headlong pace, keeping neck and neck until Fontelle was reached.

"Unruffled yet?" exclaimed Disbrowe, striking an attitude, as Jacquetta, declining his aid, leaped lightly off her horse, and ran up the steps and entered the house.

With a saucy nod of her curly head, Jacquetta disappeared, and passed on until she reached Augusta's room, and there she paused and knocked softly.

There was no response, and she knocked again, more loudly. Still there was no reply, and Jacquetta turned the handle and entered.

And there a terrible sight met her eyes. (To be continued—commenced in No. 3.)

Saturday Journal

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A Wild Romance of the Sea.

We shall commence, in our next issue, the following splendid romance of the Eastern Archipelago, by a favorite hand, viz.:

The Red Rajah; OR, THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIES.

A TALE OF THE MALAYAN ISLES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.
AUTHOR OF "MUSTANG HUNTERS," "KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "THE GRIZZLY HUNTERS," "THE BLACK WIZARD," ETC., ETC.

Half fact, half romance, this exciting story will command great attention from the lovers of tales of ship and sea. The Red Rajah is a remarkable man—not a Malay, but a Virginian—who, from a strange motive, becomes the Sea Scourge. His deeds, with his crews of Red Devils, are told with a spirit and knowledge of the sea that will give the serial wide currency.

But with the Red Rajah there is another element of interest especially captivating—that of the Child of the Wreck, the beautiful Marguerite, and of her friend the brave young Claude Peyton, the American, who, in nerve and spirit, is the foil to the great Rajah. The romance gives us a fine idea of the East, its customs and people, at a date, only one generation since, when the pirates of those seas were really monsters dreaded by the commerce of the world.

Our Arm-Chair.

Personal.—Says one of our favorite lady contributors:

"Captain Adams is quite outdoing himself in 'Old Grizzle,' and I like the style of your New Contributor, Mrs. Burton, very much. The SATURDAY JOURNAL is more welcome every week."

And, speaking of Mrs. Burton, we have several very agreeable notices, from which we are induced to quote the following, which we find in the Philadelphia Sunday Dawn:

"A story of extraordinary interest, entitled, 'Adria, the Adopted; or, The Mystery of Ellesford Grange,' having an unprecedented run in the New York Saturday Journal, is from the pen of this lady. We mention this fact as a matter of pride, as we were the first to recognize Mrs. Burton's ability and give her the encouragement necessary to all new beginners. Her articles in our Quarterly and Leisure Hours over the many years of 'Gipsy Glens' first brought her into notice. She has since written for the Chimney Corner, New York Mercury, and the Saturday Journal. With the latter she is now under a three years' contract at high figures. We repeat, we are proud of our protégée's success. Long may it continue."

Mr. Albert W. Aiken is reaping not only a golden harvest in his present starring tour with his fine dramatic company, but is also adding to his fame and name. He plays as he writes—to please an intelligent audience. He calls himself, indeed, the "colloquial actor," and his success with popular audiences shows conclusively that "the populace" is far more discriminating and appreciative than it has the credit of being.

A Traveling Laugh.—Our "Fat Contributor" (A. Miner Griswold), has been lecturing with great success since September 1st. The American Literary Bureau, No. 132 Nassau street, New York city, are the sole agents for making engagements for this most unique humorist and wit, from January 1st, 1872, until the close of the season. Their territory is the entire country. His lecture, "Injun Meal," is in demand with associations, as it always. Mr. Griswold is one of the few lecturers whom it pays to call.

The Hunter-Author.—As indicating the drift of the public taste we have the remarkable popularity of stories of the border and wilderness—tales of the trapping-grounds and of the chase—romances of Indian and Scout life, etc. Since Fenimore Cooper's splendid "Deer-Slayer" and "Pathfinder," the field of forest character and experience has been one of sustained and ceaseless interest to the young and of endless pleasure to the old, and justly so, for it is so original, novel and personal that it becomes, as it were, a part of our American possessions.

No person, of all who are now writing in that field, has catered to old and young, with more acceptance than Capt. F. C. Adams, whose romantic life in the Rocky Mountain wilds, in the company of his uncle, the noted Old Grizzle Adams, gave him such material for his work as no other author ever had. His productions are so alive with the spirit of the camp, trail and scout that his professed romance reads like a life episode.

Captain Adams has in his "seven years in the wilderness," accumulated a vast fund for future labor as a romance writer, as well as for a narrative of fact that will be read with intense interest. This narrative we hope to lay before our readers. Writing as the Hunter-Author does, exclusively for the SATURDAY JOURNAL, we can promise readers good things from his pen, which will largely add to his already brilliant reputation.

Incorrect Correspondence.—A source of surprise is the large number of ill-educated men occupying leading positions in our business houses. Almost every day letters pass under our notice bearing the imprint of prominent firms, which are so ungrammatical and crude in composition as to show either that the members of the firm are themselves ignorant, or remarkably indifferent to the manner in which their assistants do their work.

This is elicited by a note before us from a

leading retail dry-goods house of this city, evidently written by their "regular correspondent," but which is almost destitute of punctuation, correct use of capitals and propriety of expression. We have but one remark to offer and that is, that ignorance of grammar, and of the properties of composition, should disqualify any person for the position of bookkeeper or general correspondent. Young men who strive to fill such positions can so readily qualify themselves in composition that their failure to do so ought to result in their rejection as assistants at the desk.

Appreciation.—A word of praise sometimes is a great inspiration to effort. We have so many letters like the following, that we ought to produce the best of all the weeklies just to show how grateful we are for the consideration bestowed upon us:

"Your paper, the best published, is skinned several times in our family. Every one likes it, from my father to my smallest sister. I do not like to praise any one author in particular where all are so good, but I will say, 'etc., etc.'"

As we aim to make our JOURNAL a household favorite such letters give assurance that we have pursued the proper course—have chosen the proper writers and material, and have given it the proper tone. It shall, hereafter, as heretofore, be our aim to increase upon the excellence attained, and we shall be disappointed, indeed, not to have it said that the SATURDAY JOURNAL is the health and home paper, *par excellence*, among all the popular weeklies.

Woman's Power.—Mrs. "Hepsey Heart-sick" sends us the following:

"I know a woman, pale and slight,
With heart in hopeless mood,
Who often toils throughout the night
To earn her husband's food—
While he, in strength of manhood's power,
Some gay saloon will visit,
And spend more money in an hour
Than she earns in a week."

and wants to know "how long will such things be?" Just as long, my dear, as women are fools enough to marry men who tipple and frequent bar-rooms. If the girls would say a curt "No!" to every young man who upholds or even indorses the drinking of liquor, there would be not only an avoidance of much misery but the saving of many a young man from the wine-cup. If the women of the land were to set their faces, like steel, against men who tasted or dealt in liquor, the end of the traffic could be seen. That is our opinion.

Our Omnibus.

A correspondent, who writes because he has something to say, gives us this Euphoric sermon in rhyme: THE LAMB AND FLOWER, OR THINGS NOT WHAT THEY SEEM.

BY ALIA LEFFEL.
A lamb was eating grass one day,
In self-complacent, pleasant way,
And tining his short, crispy nips,
The flower had nestled close beside him,
Of his short, bushy tail.

Lifting his head, he clearly spied,
Far in the pasture's distance, dyed
With crimson and enchanting red,
A luscious-looking clover-head,
In full ripe juvenescence.

The blossom, then his great desire,
No sooner nipped than, jaws afire,
He madly ran far round the lea;
The flower had nestled a bee,
That stung an injury.

Thus pleasure bubbles always seem
With proper joy and mirth to gleam;
But when, with eagerness a-flashed,
The bubble, rudely exposed, is crushed,
We find a heavy weight.

That the schoolmaster is sadly wanted in some town in Maine is pretty evident from the following letter, which, we are assured, is a literal copy:

—Mar 4 18—
Mr — Sir I understand Sir that you sa that I keep Lecker hear you at the lurst man that I Sud hav thought of telling Such a Cuscuteus lie for it is nothing but one for ther his ben not one drop of licer in this Store Sens I hav ben hear ther is three botels of Junders biters hear for sail but the is noo Sparet in it for was very perticler with him about it now I hav Such a Store as that toold it dont set vary wild and if I hear it again you will hav it to prove.

I hop you did not tel this Story but I hard you did.

Yours with respect.

Which may account for the bad spell (of weather) in Maine about the 4th of March.

"One of the cloth" having been asked to rise and explain, throws at the heads of some ministers and others this well-conceived answer to the oft-pro pounded query—

WHAT IS A SERMON?
Let us put this question to the church-goers of to-day, and look at their replies.

Some will say it is a discourse upon a text or passage of Scripture, delivered from the pulpit; some will say it is a discourse upon a moral subject, and if it be talking to the ear and pleasing to the imagination, besides furnishing a little food for the soul, which is usually digested during the time required to deliver the discourse, they say it is a good one; but if it be directed against some evil, and happen to hit some of the congregation, they are not slow to pronounce it a poor one; others will take a broader view and say it is a discourse upon some serious subject, intended to quicken our spiritual life. Thus we find the one idea of a discourse or an address, with which too often we associate the time required to deliver it and the time at which it is to be delivered, respectively, from thirty to sixty minutes and the Sabbath.

But how often have we sat for sixty minutes and listened to a discourse which we could scarcely dignify by the name of a sermon? Now, let us put the question to ourselves and see whether our answer is any better.

It is a lesson, whether taken from nature or art; whether from the discourse or the actions of a man; whether from the Sabbath-school book or the novel, even though it be stigmatized by sensational and yellow-back; whether from the SATURDAY JOURNAL, or the Christian Advocate—a lesson which teaches us to be charitable, to be amiable, and not to think too much of ourselves, but to be mindful of the welfare of others. It is a lesson which raises humanity from the level of to-day to the higher level of tomorrow.

All honor to the little church around the corner is a sermon from which a whole nation has learned a lesson of charity.

W. LIVINGSTON.
Thank you, sir, for this most proper and timely elucidation! People, now-a-days, begin to see that some of the sweetest lessons of life are preached through the popular journals, whose vast circulations give them such power for good.

Our young friend, J. R. J., helps our readers to smile in the following manner:

ENGLISH SERVANTHOODISM.

This advertisement is from the Birmingham News.

WANTED.—A general servant in a small family, where a man is kept. The housework and cooking all done by the members of the family. The gentlemen of the house all rise early, but prepare the breakfast themselves. All the washing is put out, and the kitchen is provided with every comfort and luxury. Cold meat and hash studiously avoided. Wages no object to a competent party. Reference and photographs exchanged.

LAZY.

There was once a clergyman noted for his long sermons and indolent habits. "How is it," said a man to his neighbor, "that Parson —, the laziest man living, writes those interminable sermons?" "Why," said the other, "he probably gets to writing, and he is too lazy to stop."

This was copied from a sign on a school-house out West: Truman and Huggs. Truman teaches the boys and Huggs the girls.

The last case of jealousy is that of a lady who discarded her lover, a sea captain, because he stated, in a "yarn," that he, on a certain occasion, "hugged the shore."

SMART BOY.
"Is that clock right over there?" asked a visitor, the other day.
"Right over there?" said the boy; "tain't nowhere else."

Foolscap Papers.

The Young Man of the Period.

THE only animal which we have on exhibition this evening is the fashionable young man of the period, and I may be allowed to say just here that the period seems to be unusually long.

Step forth, Charles Augustus St. John Fitz Doodle, and make a bow to the audience.

This animal, ladies and gentlemen, was not, as you suppose, captured in the wilds of Central Africa, but was picked up along Broadway, where he seems to be in his native element. There he roams in a wild and untamed state, and like his celebrated progenitor, the monkey, is incapable of civilization.

Observe him for a moment. You will see that he has a fine head—of hair, for the soil upon which it grows is extremely mellow, and he keeps it well tilled. See with what mathematical precision it is parted in the middle, and how it curls!

When this animal was born, he had run "a corner" on brains, and the consequence was he didn't get any, but he gets along very well without them, and would be lost if he had them.

His clothes were made over a last. If the tailor didn't give him fits, he would give the tailor fits.

The peculiar odor of this animal is jockey club, and you are liable to get knocked down with it.

He would sooner tolerate a stain on his character than one on his shirt-bosom, and would rather have his reputation run down than his heels.

Although you would hardly think it, he lives on earthly food and decidedly earthly drinks, for he abounds where strong drink rages, and frequently rages where strong drink abounds. Yes, young ladies, this delicate piece of organization which you have so often seen on the street-corner with his handkerchief in his hand, when it ought to have been at his nose, or whom you have seen so often at the church doors looking at the *hose annas*, sometimes gets—well, not drunk, but fashionably fuddled, as it were; doesn't know whether his grandmother is his uncle or not, or *vica versa*.

He also swears with grace and exquisite polish; indeed, it is rather a pleasure than otherwise to have him swear at you.

He is not very religious, but he plays billiards with great fervency and zeal. He gets so much absorbed in the game that he has occasionally gone off without paying for it.

His education doesn't go very far, for it would be of little use to him. He went to school for a while and got it into his mind that six times seven are forty-eight, and that a noun is the object of a name or something else, and that all the old man's money divided among himself would be equal to just what he expected without any remainder, and he was satisfied to quit school and go to looking pretty.

In the society of ladies he particularly shines, and his conversation is very profound upon all such deep, philosophical topics as the last hop, the theater, state of the weather, poodle pups, and ice-cream candy; and, although he has a mind not very well versed in the wisdom of the ancients, yet he has a leg that can't be beaten at dancing, and that is much better.

When he artfully smokes his cigar, I always think of the old saying, "A fool and one end and a little fire at the other," or "A fire at one end and a little fool at the other." I beg his pardon, I don't know which it is.

He would be worth more to the world if he was more valuable, and would be held in higher esteem if he was thought more of. True, he labors with a great deal of assiduity in arranging his neck-tie or in drawing on his boots, which are as many sizes too small for his feet as his soul is too small for his body.

To make the fellow he sees in the mirror look fatter, whether he is or not, is his only care, and he feels lost without wings.

He always keeps up with the fashions, and he is surer of getting ahead of them than getting behind them.

He was put up expressly for flirtations, and the young lady who sets her cap to capture him will be sure to find herself caught, for he can not be domesticated to any alarming extent.

When I see him swelling it down-street, with his kid hat, and plug gloves, and fancy cane, twirling it and his mustache, don't I ache to ride him twelve and a half feet in the space of the millionth of a half a minute on the toe of my boot! Don't I?

Charles Augustus, etc., make your bow.
WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

IMAGINARY EVILS.—Imaginary evils soon become real ones, by indulging our reflections on them; as he who in a melancholy fancy sees something like a face on the wall or wainscot, can, by two or three touches with a lead-pencil, make it look visible, and agreeing with what he fancied.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unusable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—Book MS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book MS., and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wasted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy;" third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. The Commercial News-size paper is most convenient to editor and compositor, bearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Will find place for "Love's Sacrifice;" "Blanca's Champion;" "The Stepphens;" "The Ranger's Revenge;" "Over the Sea;" "Woman;" "The Girl Who Gave Me the Mitten;" "Saved by a Bear;" "A Woman's Heroism;" "Leafless Wood."

The MS., "Madame Fowles and Madame Fulbright," we return for revision.

Author of "A Dream" will please reduce it one-half. It is prolix.

MS., "Hunter's Yarns," is very fair, but any thing in that line, after our own Ringwood has talked to readers, must be very good to warrant its use by us.

We return, as not available, "She Didn't Know She Loved Him;" "Dancing Shoes;" "In the Woods;" "Nethersel;" "A Kite-Boy;" "The Brother's Sacrifice;" "Nine Days' Grace;" "I Will Not Do It;" "Ben Brandon's Heritage;" "A Snow Image."

We can not use the following, remitted without stamps for return, viz.: "How Jim Bradley Received the Scar;" "The Girl He Didn't Marry;" "Let It Pass;" "Through Long years;" "Dead-dead;" "A Sea Monster;" "The Girl of the Period;" "The Gold Bracelet;" "Starry Nights;" "Ten Cents' Worth of Wrong."

Poems, "Lines Written to a Beautiful Moonlight;" "My Boys;" "Remembrance;" "Seaside Stone's Story;" "Serenade"—must bide their time. Authors will please bear in mind that we must prefer short poems, for copy space can be used infrequently. Almost every one of those here named would have been more acceptable if they had been briefer.

The contributions by Jas. McN. we are so sure are not original that we must request their sender to favor us no more.

Learn Sumner. We do not care for reprint matter—certainly do not pay for what is not yours to sell.

To the MS., "Father-in-law's Crime," we must say no. We have so much matter of the character that we must necessarily discard most of that which is offered.

C. A. K. If a lady puts a slight upon you never permit her to repeat it. "Out" her, not rudely, but with dignified indifference.

J. H. Bright asks how much it costs to learn the profession of a physician. Judging by the ease with which doctors are diplomated in the Philadelphia Medical College, we should say about \$50.

CHARLEY asks: "Which had the best military qualifications, General Wayne or General Gates?" These officers were too unlike for comparison. Wayne was a kind of Phil Sheridan—Gates a cautious, feel-your-way, red-tape martinet. Wayne was Blucher and Marat combined; Gates was an elaborated edition of Frederick the Great's tactics.

LUCIE asks us if we can tell her in what style of waist she shall make a new silk. Certainly. In the latest style. What is that? Well, we don't know, but here is what one who does know, says: "The blouse waist is now quite in the ascendant. The plain round corse exists no longer, unless when trimmed with the box-plais so much worn in the summer. These are braided, embroidered or trimmed with passementerie. The Pompadour, square and pointed neck corse, retains its favor for evening, decollete dresses, meaning full dress, demands a greater scantiness of neck-covering than has of late years been permissible. The corse is now made in a waste advice, for, when this reaches our friend, the style may have changed. One month works wondrous changes in fashion attire."

A SHAKESPEARE writes a doleful note and says he is a victim to the chills. Go where he will he has the shakes! and asks: "Can you suggest any thing to help me?" Certainly we can, or Dr. Hall can for us. He says: "1st—Avoid exposing yourself to the malarial air after sunset and before sunrise. 2d—Occupy rooms at night on the sunny side of the house and up stairs. 3d—Build a fire in the hearth as soon as the dew begins to fall. The heat of the fire will do much to kill the malaria. 4th—Keep the sick healthy and active by taking a walk every day on rising, in a warm room, with sufficient friction to produce healthy reaction. Keep the bowels open by a proper diet. In nine cases out of ten the cause of ague would be easily overcome if the purgating organs were not overtaxed, and morbid matters allowed to accumulate in the system to oppress it."

MARY E. G. writes to complain of ill-neglect by the press. She says that her poems are copied over and over again, but that times out of ten her name is omitted as author, and asks: "How can this be prevented?" We don't see how it can. If editors are mean enough to scratch off an author's name from a reprint poem they will laugh at censure. We see John G. Saxe's recent poem, "The Dead Letter," is now "upon the rounds" without his name. It is one of the discourtesies for which there seems to be no corrective.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

We this week present the opening chapters of

CAPT. MAYNE REID'S

Great story of the Cross-Timbers,

The Mustangers!

the author's last serial story. He probably will not write another very soon.

Of another real literary brilliant we shall present the first chapters in the coming issue, in the

THE PRAIRIE AND THE OCEAN.

BY S. M. FRAZIER.

Far away in the West, the distant West,
Where cloud and mist the prairies enfold,
Where the soft, bright rays of the setting sun
Streak till and vale with velvet and gold;
There Nature rules in beauty supreme,
Surpassing the poet's most gorgeous dream.

Where the broad plain rolls far away from view,
Each well clothed in a carpet of green,
Bright flowers peep forth in bluish anemone,
Kissed into life, yet modest in mien—
Rose lips drooping with dew from above—
Emblems of purity—symbols of love.

Like old ocean's swells subsiding to rest,
Lulled by scores of phosphoric gems,
The green prairie rolls away to the West,
Starred by thousands of flowering stems:
The phosphoric glimmer of the ocean crest,
Like the floral glitter on the prairie's breast.

Alike—ah, and yet how unlike they are!
Restless ocean, the sport of the storm;
Where weird inhabitants shrink from the war,
And hide far down in her depths in alarm—
From wind-tossed wave and the thunder's roar,
Where seething surf lashes the rocky shore.

But storms also sweep the prairie at times,
When the wild wind escapes from his coils;
When darkness and gloom envelop the earth,
When the heated air with moisture swells;
When the fierce, red bolt leaps forth from his lair,
And the thunder rocks on the trembling air.

Away far down in the tempest-tossed sea,
Her occupants are sheltered from harm,
While the surface groans 'neath the storm-king's
breath,
In her depths below reigns a calm.
But where is found for the bird of the plain,
A safe retreat from the wind and the rain?

The Flaming Talisman:

THE UNFULFILLED VOW.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK CRESCENT," "HOODWINKED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER III.

THE UGLY CONFERENCE.

A—more of mystery—
The solemn hour
Of morning's night
Saw foes conjoined in power
To plot the blow of rival's hateful guile—
To rob a lover of a lover's smile.

As Herwin Reese spoke, the hag's manner altered, somewhat, to a blunt welcome.

He brushed past her, and, without waiting until she had closed the door, continued on to a room beyond, where he threw himself into a chair.

The apartment wore an aspect of comfort and luxury combined, with every conceivable appearance to the furniture of a thoroughly-arranged bed-chamber.

It was the sleeping-room of Meg Semper. When she had re-belted, re-locked and barred the door, she joined him.

"Ha!" she cried, striding up to him, and bending down to peer closely into his face: "what brings you here now? Do you know it's long after midnight? You're gloomy, too. You won't speak. Tell me what's wrong? Hey?" and her voice, at first loud, harsh, chattering, settled to a low hiss of inquiry.

"What's the matter, I say? And you came in barked! Devils! speak out." "I am driven to madness!" suddenly cried the valet, with such vehemence that Meg Semper started back from her stooping posture.

"Heigho!"—distending her eyes, and throwing her brows into the shape of an inverted triangle—"you're mad, eh? So—you look like it. Now, what are you mad about?"

Reese began pacing the room. "Every thing!" he muttered, between his grinding teeth.

"Oh! every thing? is a good deal. Now, sit down. What is it?"

He resumed his chair and said, more calmly. "Nemil delivered the letter to-day."

"He did! He did! Yes—and I've got the money."

"Father and son have had a quarrel, in consequence—"

"Good! Ha! h—! That's what we want!"

"Mervin Darnley, it seems, has learned much of his son's recent habits, and the letter was as a lighted match to the magazine. I was called in to-night to give testimony."

"That's good, too! Well?"

"Of course I told all I knew." His eyes glittered, venomously, and Meg Semper chuckled lowly.

"But," he added, "the culmination of the affair is, I've been discharged."

"Eh? That's bad," she commented, frowning.

"More—I was kicked from the house."

"What!" yelled Meg Semper, the frown upon her wrinkled forehead deepening to a scowl.

"Ay, with a kick and a blow, I was knocked from the steps to the middle of the street. O—h! curses—curses!" and his hands clenched till the nails sunk in the flesh.

"Who did it? Who did it?" hissed, cried, snarled the hag, her eyes snapping fiercely, and her features distorting in excitement.

"Reginald Darnley—kicked him!"

"Reginald Darnley?" she fairly howled; "and he did it?—he kicked you? By Satan!—and I had him at my knife-point only this night!"

"What do you mean?"

"He was here—came to see Orle. I would have killed him then; but the Talisman saved his life, as it has done twice before. I'm mad with thinking of the 'curst thing'!"

"Orle used it?"

"Yes. Who else? But there's only three left, now—only three! When they're gone, too, nothing can prevent me keeping my oath! And I'll keep it sooner, unless she watches me close!—I will!"

"I think it's better to follow my plan, Meg," he said, studiously.

"But it may take too long—that's all. Devils a-loose! my oath was to kill him. If you want to do it your way, then keep him out of my sight. I can't think of any thing but killing him, when I see him!" Her mouth twitched nervously, her eyes were ablaze with a demon look.

"Don't work yourself into a frenzy. I can't help it. I'll have his life—I will!—it's my oath—"

"Not if I can prevent it!" interrupted a voice.

Orle Deice stood in the doorway.

"Thought you'd gone to bed?" screamed the hag, in surprise.

"I heard a knock," said Orle, advancing, "and was curious to know who it could be. Besides, you are talking in a voice to rouse the dead. It is fortunate that this house stands alone, and again fortunate that the walls are thick—or you would have some

one searching out the cause of such disturbance. What brings you here, Herwin Reese?"

"Orle—" His eyes were fixed upon her in a passionate gaze; his mien softened.

"Tell me what brings you here?" she repeated, as he hesitated while studying her charms.

"I am discharged."

"Discharged?"

"Yes, Orle; and have been kicked from the house of the Darnleys."

"Kicked! What for?"

"Because—" A quick, warning glance from Meg Semper checked him; and the hag spoke:

"Yes, Orle Deice, Herwin had to tell of your lover's bad habits—that's all. And Reginald has kicked him out for it! Here she burst into a loud, sepulchral laugh, but added, immediately:

"And Herwin, her lover's give her the mit! He's left her! Ha! h—! There's a row now. She hates him some, I guess. What are you going to do, Orle Deice?"

"No, Meg Semper, I do not hate him. I still love him. He is still mine. But, stop this. You ask me what I shall do. It is partly that question which brings me here. You say Nemil is in bed?"

"Nemil? Yes—obstinate tiger!—he wouldn't stop to take his wine, he was so tired when he came in."

"Wake him up."

"Ho! Wake him up? But you'll have him mad!"

"No matter. I must see him at once, while my bosom is warm with hate for this girl—Cecilia Bernard!"

assassin who lurks within a gloomy forest, to waylay the unconscious traveler, so do you wait to vent, from concealment, the venom of your hate! Say no more to me of love, or—I shall despise you! Hush!—here they come."

Meg Semper returned at that juncture, accompanied by the party called Nemil.

He was an African of towering build, bristling, bearded front, scowling, hang-dog visage, and muscular frame. His face was black as lamp-smoke and of vengeful expression; his eyes were bloodshot and of brutal glance; his voice was of a guttural baritone.

In no very good-humor at being aroused from a sound sleep, he preceded Meg, with long strides, and glared at the two who seemed awaiting his coming.

"Well," he snarled, "what do you wake me up at this time for?"

"A matter of business, Nemil," returned Orle, authoritatively.

But her tone was far from quieting, for he exclaimed, with a savage growl and a grunt:

"Business be cursed! I'm tired. Can't keep on my feet for all time—nor can anybody else! Do you know that?"

"Tush, Nemil! you're an ass!" cried Meg.

"But," spoke the valet, who—though he had not the remotest idea what Orle wanted of the African, yet, despite her recent treatment of him, was eager to sustain her—sought to soothe him, "we thought you were fond of money."

"Ha! money?" quickly ejaculated the negro, while his eyes shone greedily.

calmly brook the casting of a stain upon it.

Then the young man's cheek whitened as he thought of another thing: what if Mervin Darnley should disown him? If such happened, what had the future in store?—poverty, degradation; for Reginald's winnings at the baize table were equibalanced by his losses, and, therefore, a meager, if any, resource lay in this.

Though educated for society, he was without a trade. Would his friends aid him? Were there those among his "Bohemian" acquaintances—his card-tricking, dice-bantering, "sharp"-playing associates—who would lend him a helping hand?

Thus ruminating, he fell asleep.

He did not awake from his sound, though restless, slumber until nine o'clock next morning, and would have slept much later had there not been a loud rap at his door.

A servant presented a note.

Trembling with agitation, he tore open the epistle. As he perused the lines, all color fled from his cheeks, he staggered and clutched the mantel-piece for support, his knees grew weak and his brain dizzy.

His worst fears were realized. The note ran thus:

"REGINALD DARNLEY:

Not content with sullying the name of Darnley by your infamous conduct, you have proven yourself an unprincipled liar! It is my duty to maintain the honor and dignity of our house, at every sacrifice. Therefore, understand! I no longer consider you son of mine, and bid you, now and forever, quit my presence! Go—go to those whose vile surroundings you preferred to the home I have striven to make pleasant for you; go, where a Darnley never went before! And this is the ending of a parent's fondest hopes—of seeing you an upright man, honored among men—a true shadow. My heart bleeds—but the justice of my course will heal it. Do not seek an interview: I would be spared its pain, and shall not waver in my purpose.

MERVIN DARNLEY."

And by this act did the manufacturer seek to cleanse the sullied page.

"Disowned! Disowned!" groaned Reginald, hoarsely. "God! what am I to do?"

An hour after learning of his home-exile, the young man was seated in a quiet restaurant, at breakfast.

He had immediately left the house, collecting what ready money he could count, and, with a desperate spirit, braced himself to face the world, alone, without that shelter which had opened to him, always, from birth to manhood.

As he sipped the warm coffee, his fine, dark eyes seemed to have lost much of their wonted brilliancy; his face was pale, dejected, in expression.

After securing rooms, he walked out to the busy street, and turned—he cared not whither.

The noisy hum of business on every side did not arouse him from his meditations, as, with head hung, he pursued an indefinite course.

Unknowningly, he wandered from the liveliest sections—presently, he became aware that he was followed.

Glancing back, he saw an aged woman approaching with a basket on her arm. Something in her appearance struck him. He halted. In a few seconds, she came up.

"Ha! h—! Reginald Darnley, we've met again, eh?"

There was no mistaking that voice; it was the fiend-visaged hag, Meg Semper.

She dropped the basket; her hand sought the murderous knife that was secreted in the folds of her dress.

Shuddering, he glanced quickly about him; not a soul in sight. He was almost in the suburbs of the city. The thoroughfare was lonely, deserted; and on the ominous stillness arose the hum of the distant market.

"I told you I was going to be your death!" cried the hag, advancing upon him.

How strange the fascination of those basilisk eyes! They held him riveted in a horrible magnetism.

"Ha! h—! you're doomed. Prepare! My oath!—my oath!"

Thrills of ineffable horror, quick and startling to the nerves, flashed through his system; his mouth twitched, his hands worked convulsively, great beads of sweat started upon his brow; clammy chills shot through his veins; his eyes were fixed staringly on the creature who menaced him, while all strength froze upon his muscles—left him powerless, dismayed.

Was it to be a murder, in broad daylight, upon the public street!

"Doomed, Reginald Darnley!—doomed!" another step; the shining knife glistened in her hand.

Suddenly there was the rustle of a dress, the wind of a swiftly passing figure; something quivered for an instant before the hag's eyes—a small, white hand and wrist, with the single tongue of flame—the Talisman!

Meg Semper uttered a half-smothered howl of rage, and wheeled around in time to see the figure of a woman, with long, dark hair floating in waves about her shoulders as she sped away.

Reginald was released from the horrible charm, and, with an indescribable feeling of dread, he turned and fled from the spot.

Meg Semper gazed after the female figure, and if she had had teeth, they would have been pulverized in the fierce working of the mouth, as she muttered:

"By Satan! I thought the girl was safe at home. How'd she get on my heels so quick, eh? She said, last night, she'd prevent my doing it, if she could. She watches me close. Only for the 'curst Talisman, I'd have his life! And I will have his life!—if he's in the house, or on the street, or anywhere. It's my oath! But, now, there's only two left! Ha! h—! I only two more—only two more! And when they're gone, then—ha! ha! ha! he must die, anyhow. Nothing can save him!" and with this, she recovered her basket and moved away.

This occurrence, this miraculous escape from a death that seemed inevitable, increased the fog of mystery which hazed and perplexed the young man's mind.

Why was the hag so persistent in her resolve to take his life? He had never done her injury—never saw her until the night previous. Ay, and through what intervention had he been preserved on these two occasions, when the fiend, with murder in her eyes and a deadly blade in her hand, was so near accomplishing her dire purpose?

Thus trained the thoughts and questions in his mind as he slackened his gait to a slow, meditative walk.

On neither occasion had he seen the Talisman; so obvious had his senses been to all save the shuddering realization of a pending doom, and sight of the hideous being who would mete that doom.

"Hello, Rex! How'd you do?"

Reginald looked up. He stood before the

one searching out the cause of such disturbance. What brings you here, Herwin Reese?"

"Orle—" His eyes were fixed upon her in a passionate gaze; his mien softened.

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As he sipped the warm coffee, his fine, dark eyes seemed to have lost much of their wonted brilliancy; his face was pale, dejected, in expression.

After securing rooms, he walked out to the busy street, and turned—he cared not whither.

The noisy hum of business on every side did not arouse him from his meditations, as, with head hung, he pursued an indefinite course.

Unknowningly, he wandered from the liveliest sections—presently, he became aware that he was followed.

Glancing back, he saw an aged woman approaching with a basket on her arm. Something in her appearance struck him. He halted. In a few seconds, she came up.

"Ha! h—! Reginald Darnley, we've met again, eh?"

There was no mistaking that voice; it was the fiend-visaged hag, Meg Semper.

She dropped the basket; her hand sought the murderous knife that was secreted in the folds of her dress.

Shuddering, he glanced quickly about him; not a soul in sight. He was almost in the suburbs of the city. The thoroughfare was lonely, deserted; and on the ominous stillness arose the hum of the distant market.

"I told you I was going to be your death!" cried the hag, advancing upon him.

How strange the fascination of those basilisk eyes! They held him riveted in a horrible magnetism.

"Ha! h—! you're doomed. Prepare! My oath!—my oath!"

Thrills of ineffable horror, quick and startling to the nerves, flashed through his system; his mouth twitched, his hands worked convulsively, great beads of sweat started upon his brow; clammy chills shot through his veins; his eyes were fixed staringly on the creature who menaced him, while all strength froze upon his muscles—left him powerless, dismayed.

Was it to be a murder, in broad daylight, upon the public street!

"Doomed, Reginald Darnley!—doomed!" another step; the shining knife glistened in her hand.

Suddenly there was the rustle of a dress, the wind of a swiftly passing figure; something quivered for an instant before the hag's eyes—a small, white hand and wrist, with the single tongue of flame—the Talisman!

Meg Semper uttered a half-smothered howl of rage, and wheeled around in time to see the figure of a woman, with long, dark hair floating in waves about her shoulders as she sped away.

Reginald was released from the horrible charm, and, with an indescribable feeling of dread, he turned and fled from the spot.

Meg Semper gazed after the female figure, and if she had had teeth, they would have been pulverized in the fierce working of the mouth, as she muttered:

"By Satan! I thought the girl was safe at home. How'd she get on my heels so quick, eh? She said, last night, she'd prevent my doing it, if she could. She watches me close. Only for the 'curst Talisman, I'd have his life! And I will have his life!—if he's in the house, or on the street, or anywhere. It's my oath! But, now, there's only two left! Ha! h—! I only two more—only two more! And when they're gone, then—ha! ha! ha! he must die, anyhow. Nothing can save him!" and with this, she recovered her basket and moved away.

This occurrence, this miraculous escape from a death that seemed inevitable, increased the fog of mystery which hazed and perplexed the young man's mind.

Why was the hag so persistent in her resolve to take his life? He had never done her injury—never saw her until the night previous. Ay, and through what intervention had he been preserved on these two occasions, when the fiend, with murder in her eyes and a deadly blade in her hand, was so near accomplishing her dire purpose?

Thus trained the thoughts and questions in his mind as he slackened his gait to a slow, meditative walk.

On neither occasion had he seen the Talisman; so obvious had his senses been to all save the shuddering realization of a pending doom, and sight of the hideous being who would mete that doom.

"Hello, Rex! How'd you do?"

Reginald looked up. He stood before the

one searching out the cause of such disturbance. What brings you here, Herwin Reese?"

"Orle—" His eyes were fixed upon her in a passionate gaze; his mien softened.

"Tell me what brings you here?" she repeated, as he hesitated while studying her charms.

"I am discharged."

"Discharged?"

"Yes, Orle; and have been kicked from the house of the Darnleys."

"Kicked! What for?"

"Because—" A quick, warning glance from Meg Semper checked him; and the hag spoke:

"Yes, Orle Deice, Herwin had to tell of your lover's bad habits—that's all. And Reginald has kicked him out for it! Here she burst into a loud, sepulchral laugh, but added, immediately:

"And Herwin, her lover's give her the mit! He's left her! Ha! h—! There's a row now. She hates him some, I guess. What are you going to do, Orle Deice?"

"No, Meg Semper, I do not hate him. I still love him. He is

resses at his shoulder. Quickly averting her eyes, she said:

"You draw too abrupt an inference." The evasive words were lost upon him. "Your hand trembles on my arm—Cecilia."

"Trembles—"

"Yes. I am satisfied now. Come—I have fixed my resolve; listen—"

"Let us return to the house, Mr. Waldron."

"And disappoint the birds that sing now, for your especial pleasure? How ungenerous that would be! Here is a seat. Sit down; I beg."

She yielded to his request, though seeming anxious to avoid what was pending. She knew what was eager to escape his lips, knew that he would whisper words of love and devotion; the quick perception of a cultivated mind had discovered this.

"Miss Bernard—Cecilia," he said, presently; "it's now over six months since I became a visitor at your father's house. During that time, I have learned to love you. It is of that love I would speak."

"Your love, Mr. Waldron?" with a slight start, and voice not so even as it might have been.

"Yes," he interrupted, fervently. "Now, will you not let me plead this love? My every hope is centered—"

"Hush!"—her voice low, and manner that of one ill at ease—"do not speak of this, Mr. Waldron—do not."

"Nay, listen, while I tell you how dear you are to me; while I tell you what life will be to me without you—"

"No, no, no; cease. I can not—I have no right to listen."

Their gaze was one; their eyes volumed that sweet, subtle power which links hearts in a bond of mutual affection.

But there was an unrest in her glance; something marred the pleasure of her thoughts.

Then, yielding to the warmth that swelled each fiber of her system, she pillowed her head upon his breast.

"Let me know my fate, darling. But why should I ask?—I see you are already mine—speak, am I right?"

"I do love you, no, no; what am I saying! I must not love you."

"Must not! In Heaven's name!—have I asked too late for that which I so fondly hoped to call my own? Unsay those words, Cecilia."

"No—no; I must not love—and yet—"

"Ah, yet?"

"I do love you, for my heart will have it so."

Her words were quick, short-breathed; the luster of her eyes was dimmed; there was a sob in her voice, which only a painful effort could restrain.

In a passionate impulse, he drew her unresisting form closer to him, and felt the fair frame quiver in his embrace.

Quickly, however, she disengaged herself, as if ashamed of the part she had acted, and started to her feet.

"I forgot myself!" she exclaimed, in confusion. "Let us retire to the house at once."

"No, not forgotten yourself, but told me that I have won your heart. I am not fully answered, yet. Your hand now, Cecilia—will you give it, also?"

"Do not press this subject, Mr. Waldron. Come; please return to the house."

"Will you not give me a definite answer?" he persisted, mildly.

"You are cruel. I have begged you to desist."

As they retraced their steps along the gravel path, he asked:

"Why do you evade me in this, Cecilia?"

"Because it is my duty."

"Duty? Why, if your heart is given, do you refuse the answer which I believe is justly due? Will you tell me this?"

"No." The reply was low, but firm.

"Will you not confide in me? Tell me why, how you love, and will not plight a lover's truth."

"I have nothing to confide, Mr. Waldron."

"But you love me?"

"Yes," was the soft, impulsive answer, and the weight on his arm grew heavier.

A thrill of joy passed over him; but it was doomed to an abrupt displacement, for she added:

"It must end there. I am wrong in admitting it, and you must forget it. I can never be your wife."

For a second, he was dumb.

"Love me as you do!" he exclaimed; "and can not, will not be my wife? In the name of Heaven!—what mystery is this?"

"Mr. Waldron—cease—show mercy. Do not rend my heart by continuing this conversation."

"But, tell me what you mean. Will you not give me a hope?"

"I can not! I can not!"

He was silent. How strange it seemed to him, that he could possess the fair girl's love, hear her, in unmistakable syllables, declare a reciprocation of his affection, yet hear of an impediment to their marriage.

What mysterious power limited the heart and action to attest a love, while it compelled the lips to utter impossibility of holy union.

When they reached the steps leading to the vine-clad porch, she would have retained his arm; but he halted.

"Cecilia, I must bid you good-day."

"So soon!"—quickly, and surprised.

"I have already stayed too long. Pleasant dreams by day and night, until we meet again," though his voice was broken, dispirited.

She must have seen how keen his disappointment; she must have felt anxious, for she detained him, to say, while she looked yearningly up into his face:

"Harry, we part friends, do we not? You will come again—soon? Oh! if you did but know how terrible it is for me to learn your love, to return that love, yet be unable to bestow my hand!—you are not angry?"

"I can not so far forget that I am a gentleman, Cecilia."

An emotion worked within his breast as he listened to her words—so full of love and yet so wounding. His lips moved, as if to plead anew the cause which seemed hopeless; he would have clasped her to him. But, with a mighty effort, he refrained.

Another parting word, a bow that was distant, even icy, and he departed.

A few steps, and he looked back. She stood where he had left her, her face buried in her hands, and a low sobbing reached his ears.

Should he return. Irresolute, he paused; the next instant he passed on, out at the rose-twined gate.

Cecilia stood, for a long time, solitary and weeping.

From the interchange of loving words, the soft sigh, the fond caress, the magnetism of lip to lip—these we know that her heart was given to Henry Waldron. Given wholly? Wait.

When the tear-dimmed eyes had partially regained their former luster, and the heavy-lidded bosom was schooled to cease its throbbing, she glanced toward the gate, half expecting to see him lingering there, waiting for a sign, a murmured "come," that would recall him. But he was gone.

Slowly, sadly she turned from the spot and entered the house.

Alone in the privacy of her room, the anguish of a fettered spirit asserted itself.

She advanced to a small casket on a table near her bedside, and drew forth two daguerreotypes. As she gazed upon them, her sobbing grew more violent.

"Oh, God!" she moaned, "tell me my own heart. Tell me—tell me, which of these do I love best?" They fell from her hand, and sinking back upon her bed, she buried her face in the downy pillow, as if to shut from her vision that which caused her misery.

The two pictures were Henry Waldron and Reginald Darnley—the latter her affianced; though she knew not the true character of the man to whom her hand was pledged.

Her heart leaned equally toward each—she loved both Waldron and Darnley in that depth of Heaven-wrought passion alone consonant with the fervor of a pure, guileless woman. And this her misery: knowing that she loved one as the other—perhaps Darnley a little less than when she had given him a lover's promise.

At the dinner-hour, Lacy Bernard and his wife missed the sunny presence of their child.

A servant was dispatched upstairs, who returned with the information that Cecilia felt unwell.

Mrs. Bernard sought her daughter. She saw that the rosy tinge was gone from her cheeks, knew she was not well.

Cecilia would not speak her secret.

A mother's caresses were not sufficient medicine for a torn and aching heart, such as hers; it was a yearning for—she could not say what—perhaps a liberation from her vows to Reginald Darnley? And how could even that benefit her? The choice would be to be made again.

She knew their love was great; she knew she loved both in the same throbbing of her heart. Even the sweet commune of prayer served but to increase her knowledge of the wrong spirit which ruled her, despite her efforts to decide and be at rest.

The gentle whisper of her mother's voice seemed a mockery; the birds that caroled in the foliage near the house seemed to sing the louder, as if rejoiced at her unhappiness; not a perfume, breeze ruffled the curtains at her window but what contained a murmur of derision.

The day wore on.

A new choir joined in the melody that had enlivened the golden day; enchanting vespers arose from the green depths of the garden bower without, as evening gradually drew its mantle on the skies.

Alone, lying there upon her bed, half-asleep, yet awake to the surrounding changes and the cadent air of approaching night, Cecilia remained.

Beyond a far woodland, rich with the verdurous canopies of summer growth, the sun shimmered its parting rays upon the cottage home, when Cecilia aroused from her wakeful dreams.

Her features were calmer; but a glance at her mirror told how marked were the effects of that day's agony.

Mechanically she arranged her toilet; the tea-bell was tinkling in the lower hall.

There was a rap at her door. A note was handed her. Tearing open the envelope, she read:

"DEAR CECILIA:

"Unlooked-for circumstances have arisen, which compel me to leave town at once. I am so busied, I have not time to call upon you. But I would see you before I go. If you can come, follow the bearer of this note, who will conduct you to me. I am not at home."

"REGINALD."

This was strange! How unlike Reginald's way of wording a note die this on seem; but the handwriting was certainly his. Then she read it again.

"I must go. I must see him," she murmured, after a spell of thought; and addressing the servant: "Tell the bearer of the note I will come directly."

Love is strong. Despite the singularity of the request, and the fact of its being worded so unlike those she had received from him, often, there was a charm in the name of the man she loved, which prompted her to grant the writer's wish.

Hastily throwing a shawl over her shoulders, and snatching up her hat, she descended to the hall.

The man she saw was Nemil.

He was well dressed; deported himself with all the politeness of his rough, wild nature.

"Did you bring the note?" she asked, the African's visage causing her a feeling of distrust.

"Yes," he answered, briefly. "Reginald Darnley sent me. Go."

She hesitated.

"Go?" repeated Nemil.

"Yes; lead on. Is it far?"

"Not far."

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard were at tea, and, unnoticed, the two left the house.

Twilight was deepening; already dark shadows were settling in the streets.

She scanned her conductor's face. Perhaps his fierce mold forced suspicions in her mind. Why should Reginald employ such a person, when there were familiar servants at his house? But the note said he was not at home—she had momentarily forgotten this.

"How much further?" she questioned, as they hurried through several remote streets, and night was upon them.

"Not far," was the blunt answer.

Her heart fluttered. Where could he be leading her?

"Turn back! Turn back!" whispered a voice within her.

She slackened her steps—would have paused, irresolute.

"Come on. Most there," said the African.

A few more blocks were gone over; still that inward voice cried:

"Turn back! Turn back!"

It was now fully dark. The street-lamps were casting their first faint glimmer on the pavements.

Cecilia stopped short. A conviction that all was not right now fixed upon her.

"See!" urged Nemil; "only one square more. There's the house."

She saw a large, gloomy structure looming up in the darkness ahead.

Again her thought of Reginald conquered her doubts.

"He's waiting there," added Nemil, persuasively; but his eyes were aglow with a fiendish light.

She started forward with her guide; and again came the whispering voice:

"Turn back! Turn back!"

The mysterious warning was in vain. The house was reached.

"Enter!" he said, as some one swung open the door, in answer to his pull at the bell.

She obeyed, and found herself in a large hall, where evidences of wealth glittered on every side.

Nemil stepped quickly in after her, and as he shut and locked the door, he placed his back against it, while a low, guttural, savage laugh issued from his thick lips.

Before Cecilia, her radiant charms dazzling in their show, stood Orle Deice; and the dark orbs of the beauty flashed a fire of hate as she contemplated her entrapped rival.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 90.)

Adria, the Adopted: OR, The Mystery of Ellesford Grange.

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "BRANDED," "SEA HARVEST," "NYMPH'S BRAVERY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

APROLEX, the physicians declared. The Ellesfords had all been pre-disposed that way. So the late master of the Grange was laid beside those of his kin who had penetrated the dark mystery before him.

Wedding robes were laid aside for mourning garments. Could any thing have effected an enduring bond between the two lonely women at the Grange, this grief should have done it. But they were drifting apart now even away from the assumed cordiality between them.

A few months must be passed over briefly.

Joseph Ellesford, like many another man better or worse, had gone the way of the flesh, leaving undone an important act. He had made no will. True, during the last few hours of his life he believed he had rightfully nothing of which to make disposition; but he should have prepared for death's emergency long years before. He had always intended settling the full property upon Adria. Had he died and consumed his marriage as proposed, Valeria would have inherited a life interest.

As it was she put forward her claim, and was duly acknowledged sole heir.

Of the remaining Ellesfords descended from the founder of the Grange, one branch had become entirely extinct. Another, prospering but ill on American soil, had shaken its dust from their feet and gone back to reclaim the debt-burdened patrimony and empty title, which, after lapse of a century, was left in the mother country without representative.

Valeria settled securely in her new position.

She took an early opportunity to impress Adria with their change of stations.

"Of course you will stay here, my dear," she said, graciously. "I will require a companion, and some one to direct the more onerous household charges. I don't think I could suit myself better." And on the spot she named a salary, by no means liberal, considering the duties she contrived should rest upon Adria's shoulders.

The latter felt the change keenly. Her pride, which was not Ellesford, but of more independent class, would have urged her out into the world in preference to this almost menial service in the home where her wish had once been law. There was an obstacle in the way, however, one reared by her loyal, loving heart. She would take no decisive step until Kenneth's judgment should pass upon it. She temporarily accepted Valeria's ungenerous proposal, pattingly as it had been given. In the same hour she indited a few tear-blotted lines to her lover.

"Poor papa is gone!" ran a paragraph of this missive. "I am penniless, and alone in the world except for you. Tell me what is best to be done, and I will obey you just as I expect to do in the future time when our hopes and interests shall be inseparably the same. I have full faith in the wisdom of whatever you shall direct, and await your reply, longing for sympathy from the only love left me now."

Kenneth was, she knew not where, moving from place to place, unknowing himself one day where his commission might lead him upon the morrow. So Adria inclosed her missive in an envelope to the Crofton firm, begging them to forward it immediately to his address.

Heretofore, letters had arrived from him at regular intervals, every one imbued with sentiments of hope and fealty. But now time dragged away; days lengthened into weeks, and no token or word came to assure her of his grief for her sorrow, his steadfast constancy. Still she never doubted him.

Could she but have known the actual cause of this strange silence! The reader may penetrate the mystery here, though Adria was destined to remain in suspense for a weary interval.

A feeling of common respect prevented Reginald Templeton from attempting to carry his threat into execution during the first months of her bereavement.

There had been a warm scene at The Firs between the father and son. Colonel Templeton was now as anxious to destroy the possibility of an alliance between Reginald and Adria as he had before been to prosecute that consummation. It was the heiress—not the girl—at whom he aimed. Now that their stations were reversed, he would have had his son transfer his attentions to Valeria. But Reginald was not easily swayed, and after some hot words they had dropped mention of the subject between them, but were neither ready to ignore the issue.

And, meanwhile, Reginald, not openly pressing his cause, was working stealthily toward its attainment.

One of the fast men of his set, De Courcy, had succumbed to the vicissitudes of fortune—or rather folly—and after running through an ample patrimony, found himself deserted by his friends of the hour, and with starvation outspread before him.

At this juncture young Templeton came to his aid. He had some personal influence with a few lax-moraled city grandees, and his father's reputed standing invested him with more. By a judicious use of this power he obtained a situation for his unfortunate friend as agent on the immediate mail route.

De Courcy, like most men of his class, knew conscience only as a name. He had no punctilious scruples in breaking his oath and violating his duty to serve the one who had stood by him in need. Through this agency, then, the missives, for which Adria watched and longed and grew sick at heart that she received no word, were transferred instead into the rival lover's hands.

In due time the outstanding claims were brought against the surviving members of the establishment were gone. While Banks was identified with them, he had molded the junior partners plastically to his will. After his flight they had fallen back upon Mr. Ellesford, believing that he would guide them safely through the financial storm. With his decease, and the subsequent flood of liabilities flowing in upon them, they gave up all attempt to fight against the workings of adverse fortune.

Clark and Nelson were strictly honest and honorable men. They yielded up every farthing to their creditors, and the result proved more favorable than they had hoped. The assets yielded dollar for dollar. No man was wronged, but they were left without a foothold upon even the bottom round of the ladder of worldly prosperity.

It was some trivial matter connected with the settlement of these claims which brought Jonathan Sharpe to The Firs. Colonel Templeton had proved a valuable auxiliary in his double character of patron and client, the lawyer had come personally in preference to sending one of his clerks.

Their business concluded Sharpe rose, leaning against the door-sill as he worked his large hands into a pair of dog-skin gloves.

"You know Kern?" he asked.

"The detective? I have reason to." Colonel Templeton's face shaded darkly. "He and I have come near clashing once or twice."

"He's not in the force now. Quarreled with the chief and was dismissed. He has a devilish spite but they have lost a good officer. He's lightning, sir, on a search!"

"Ah, no doubt," Templeton returned, touching a match to the cigar in his teeth.

"He's rustivating with your fair neighbor of the Grange. Following up some old clue in the hope of reinstatement, I have heard."

"The devil!" The lighted cigar had fallen in the midst of loose papers upon the table, but was secured before damage resulted. "At the Grange, you said?"

"Yes, but not in character. He appears in the form of the lady's solicitor, and is ostensibly engaged with matters pertaining to the estate. By the way, how about Jenkins' foreclosure?"

Recall of his visitor a few moments later. Colonel Templeton paced the floor back and forth with teeth sunk deep in his under lip. A lowering anxiety hung over his face, but no expression to denote the traceries of his thought. Then the shade was swept away, and he went out directing his steps toward the Grange.

He had already paid assiduous court to the heiress, and received his reward by penetrating her secret. He was well aware of her partiality for his son. He read her, too, as a woman well calculated to further his scheme, and one who would not shrink from employing doubtful means to procure a coveted end.

Valeria was alone, having just dismissed the pseudo-solicitor from her presence. She met him very graciously, while he turned some ready compliment to account.

"Reginald was here an hour ago," she said. "How wretchedly ill he is looking!"

"I think my son's disease is more mind than body," he returned, absently. He was studying her and the extent to which he should deal with her.

"Then you should take some decisive measures to restore his mental equilibrium," she declared, with apparent laughing candor, but surprising his searching scrutiny with a quick, comprehensive glance from beneath downcast lids.

"Exactly what I have come to consult you about," he said, half-amazed and half-relieved that she should anticipate the expression of his thought.

"Consult me?" she echoed, her wide open hazel eyes now delivering an admirable interpretation of innocent wonderment.

"Yes, you," he returned, calmly smiling. "I see you have penetrated his hallucination. Strange that still retaining his faculties unimpaired, he should so confound identities."

Their glances met again, his questioning, hers with comprehensive response. But she affected child-like ignorance.

"Please explain to me, I am so dull. You know I shall be only too happy to serve yourself or Reginald, so far as I can."

A cynical gleam shot from his eyes.

"You must know that my son is very deeply in love with—ahem!—with the Ellesford heiress. I don't fear that you will misinterpret my meaning. As I said, very deeply in love, so much so indeed that his brain has become slightly affected, thereby causing a lamentable and exceedingly annoying misapprehension. He has become imbued with the belief that his love is embodied in the person of your companion—a very good sort of young woman I know her to be—while you and I are well aware that his enslaver is your own fair self. Suppose his delusion should continue, what deplorable consequences he may unmeaningly bring upon himself. I think it is our duty, Miss Walton, to combine efforts toward saving him."

"Undoubtedly," she replied. "My poor Reginald! What measures do you propose taking, Colonel Templeton?"

"I think," he said, slowly, "our first care must be to remove the cause of his misapprehension. Not too suddenly, nor in a manner calculated to raise suspicion of any except her own agency, but so securely that he shall be able to discover no trace of her. Yes, certainly, she must be removed."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WEARISOME winter days that came and went with unvaried monotony in the bare little prison room. Nelly Kent had long since given up all hope of escape or success.

At first she had busied her brain with impossible plans, but the strong rough plank sides and loop-holes high above letting in light and air were alike impenetrable to her efforts. She settled into an apathetic state, broken by intervals of violent grief which first perplexed, then worked alarm, in the mind of her captor.

Luke Peters had not confined himself closely as Colonel Templeton supposed (perhaps as he desired,) to the precincts of the

mill. Scarcely a night but he kept prowling vigil about The Firs, and upon the actions of the unconscious occupants. With the distrust which one villain always entertains for another he feared treachery and betrayal.

Colonel Templeton was not one to keep an implement which had aided his evil-doing about him for naught, and this long season of inactivity aroused the suspicions of the man in hiding. He ventured cautiously into the fishing-village, down upon the coast, and there had succeeded in obtaining an acquaintance with the colonel's son.

It has already been intimated that Reginald Templeton belonged to that floating class in society yclept fast men. Notoriously a *roue*. His stalwart figure and handsome face combined with the winning manner which none could better assume, found favor for him alike with all degrees. Even in this primitive village more than one buxom, stout-limbed young fisher-wench, had listened to his sophistries to the sacrifice of her maiden innocence.

On one such occasion Peters had rendered him valuable service in averting the well-merited vengeance sworn by a brother of the victim. In return, Reginald took a fancy to the dark-browed, mysterious man, and intrusted him with some commissions of no very reputable nature, but which were faithfully executed.

During this time Peters scrupulously concealed his abode, but one day some whim induced young Templeton to return from the village by way of Cross-lot Stile. A thin blue vapor curling up from the neighborhood of the deserted mill attracted his curiosity. Following it, he found the man busied over a fire in the shed which had done duty as a wheel-house, but from which the great drum had long been detached, and where a rude clay chimney had been constructed. Since the chimney discovery he had come once or twice to the place, but Luke, ever watchful for

but the man's quiet indifference recalled him to himself.

"What do you propose?"

"I want you to get her here to the mill. I know its crannies of old. There are snug corners enough, which, with a little work, will answer the purpose and be tight as a trap."

Peters stiffened at the suggestion, until his sinewy frame was rigid as cast steel.

"I can't have a woman's eyes and tongue agog here," he said, sullenly. "Make it any other crib, and I'm your man."

"There's not another such a place in the country," Reginald declared. "It will be but for a few days, Peters, and I pledge myself that nothing to your detriment shall come through it. Come, I'll make it well worth your while. Say a hundred dollars for getting her here, and as much more for the time she stays. You'll not soon make another two hundred so easily."

The pay's good enough," Luke said, slowly. He was thinking to himself. "Why not? It may be the means of saving her! A woman might cheer her up anyway, it will do no harm."

So he said aloud: "If you agree to see me safely through, I'll do as well by you. It's a bargain, then! Who is the bit of dimity I am to secure for you?"

"It is Miss Ellesford, of the Grange. Remember, my man, you are to treat her with every respect!"

He then proceeded to give a minute description of Adria's personal appearance and daily habits. He left Peters to decide upon his own course in accomplishing the abduction.

"To-morrow night, if possible," he concluded. "I have a reason for wishing to hasten the affair!"

This reason at that moment lay in his pocket, in shape of a note from Hastings. It announced his return to Crofton, and his intention of presenting a speedy appearance at the Grange. He had received no replies to his numerous letters, but attributed this fact to his own uncertain locations.

While Reginald yet lingered, there came the sound of horse's hoofs borne down the beaten bridle-path. With a last, hasty word, he plunged into a thicket of scrubby undergrowth, making his way homeward over the barren fields. A moment later his father, Colonel Templeton, drew rein almost upon the very spot he had so lately quitted. Coincidences are of not rare occurrence. Plotting and counter-plotting frequently defeat each other unawares.

Strangely enough, Colonel Templeton, though actuated by entirely opposite motives, was here upon the self-same mission that had brought his son.

"She must be removed," he had said to Valeria. Who so well fitted to undertake the task as his old ally, Luke Peters? What place so well calculated to furnish secure shelter, yet remain free of suspicion, as the ruinous old mill?

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 85.)

OLD GRIZZLY, The Bear-Tamer:

OR, THE
WILD HUNTRESS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.
BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,
AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS," "OR, NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER," "THE BLACKFOOT QUEEN," "OLD NICK WHIFFLES IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE TEST.

"This way, quick!" cried Old Grizzly, catching the huntress' hand, and darting off through the bushes.

Alfred Badger, supporting Silver Tongue, closely followed, while the rear was brought up by Hammond and Leaping Elk, who appeared determined to stand by his new friends.

As the last left the rock, the sound of the advancing warriors' feet could be plainly heard as they dashed over the hard, level ground that lay between the village and the rendezvous.

Since the first alarm no yell had been uttered, but this only rendered the danger greater as the fugitives could not tell in what direction to expect the attack.

They were men not easily daunted by seemingly imminent danger.

Knowing every inch of the ground, Old Grizzly led the way, not only with absolute certainty, but by the nearest cuts and turns, so as to gain as much time as possible.

As long as they could keep within the ravine, there was no chance of discovery, but the reader will remember that it only ran a comparatively short distance of the way that must be traversed.

From the ravine they must emerge upon the open prairie, and there, they knew, discovery was almost certain.

"Hyer, take the woman," said the bear-tamer to the Avenger. "You an' the boyee w' the gal push on ahead. Make fur the timber *delos* your ranch, mind, *delos* it, an' then feel yur way up under kiver. As to yur," he said, turning to Leaping Elk. "You jess scout outen this. Yur can't do no good, an' ef you people find out that you've been helpin' us, that'll be catamounts to pay."

Always thoughtful of others, even in such an emergency, the bear-tamer sought to save the lad from harm, and we may say here that he succeeded, for Leaping Elk got back to the village undetected.

When this disposition had been made, Old Grizzly bade the others push ahead, while he tried to divert attention to himself. Alfred and Hammond, with their charges, pushed ahead up the ravine, while Old Grizzly, turning square off, breasted the hillside, and soon emerged upon the open prairie under the full light of the moon. As he had expected, he was instantly sighted by the pursuing Blackfeet, who, not knowing that there were others, turned off and began a keen pursuit of the daring man.

This was what Old Grizzly desired, and, with a chuckle, and muttering: "You'll have a good time a-gittin' me," sprung away toward the mountain where lay the home of the Wild Huntress, with a speed that soon left the swiftest warrior far in the rear.

Taking advantage of this diversion, the remaining fugitives left the ravine, stole swiftly across the open ground, gained the foothill, and finally reached the timber, as directed, some distance below the bear-tamer's camp.

Here they were safe, and, in the course of half an hour, were seated within the inclosure anxiously awaiting Old Grizzly's return.

It was toward midnight before the deep bark of the watch-dog told of some one ad-

vancing, and a moment later, the bear-tamer himself stood within the secure walls of his castle.

A few words sufficed to explain his escape, and then the hunters drew off, leaving mother and daughter alone.

Those two, so long severed, sat for hours locked in each other's arms, recounting their past experiences, talking in low, hushed voices, of the dead husband and father, and laying plans that were to govern the future.

At length wearied nature gave way, and all sought a sleeping-place, the women within, and the men without the cavern.

Morning dawned bright and clear, and soon the little camp was alive with busy preparations.

The old bear-tamer was preparing to defend his castle, for he well knew that the Blackfeet would not give up their chief's daughter without a deadly struggle.

And he was right. While they were snatching a hasty repast, the warning bark of the watchful sentinel told them that the struggle was near at hand.

"Up with ye, an' gup yur weepins for I tell yur that's goin' to be Ole Scratch to pay!" cried Old Grizzly, grasping his rifle and running down to the entrance, into which he disappeared.

THE END.

When he reached the further end and peeped out from behind the rock that lay in front, a startling scene met his eye.

"Paggots an' flints! the hull tribe, men, weemin an' children, ar' out!" he exclaimed over his shoulder to Alfred and the Avenger, who had just come up. "Jest take a peek an' see what yur thinks uv it."

Alfred looked out, and almost instantly exclaimed:

"Here comes an Indian with a flag of truce."

"Ar' thet so?" quickly asked Old Grizzly. "Wal, I didn't look fur thet, now! It ar' better'n I hoped fur. Yur see they don't like to tackle me an' the b'ars, an' I don't much blame 'em."

"They think you are a big Medicine," said Hammond, quietly. "That is the true reason of their not attacking."

"Wal, I guess yur'r bout right. Ennyhow, here's the red-skin, an' we'll soon know what ar' up."

As he ceased speaking Iron Heel, for it was that gallant warrior, stepped briskly forward, carrying in his hand a piece of bleached buckskin and halted some few feet in front.

"What do 'ee want, red-skin?" asked Old Grizzly, walking out and advancing to where the Indian stood.

"The Man of the Bears came like a thief, and when it was night stole the daughter of the chief. I have come for her," was the stern reply.

"That's a dod-dered lie, red-skin," exclaimed the old trapper, angrily, "an' ef you hedn't thet white thing in yur hand, I'd drive it down yur throat!"

"Where is Silver Tongue, the daughter of Big Hand?" asked Iron Heel, calmly.

"In that," shouted the bear-tamer, "an' thar sh'll stay till she wants to leave uv her own wautin'." I tell you what, red-skin—

"The warriors call me Iron Heel," said the Indian.

"Wal, then, Mr. Iron Heel, I'll tell you what I'll do. You go an' fetch Big Hand. He may see the gal, an' ef she wants to go back w' him why well an' good, he may have her—but stop," as the Indian turned hastily away; "ef she don't want to go back, ain't willin', you know, why then she'll be lone to go whar she wants to. Do ye agree to thet?"

"Big Hand will answer the Man of the Bears," replied the warrior, striding rapidly away.

In the course of half an hour he again appeared, this time accompanied by the head chief of the tribe.

Big Hand was evidently fearfully incensed, but, as the Avenger had said, he considered Old Grizzly too much of a Medicine to quarrel with, if it could be avoided.

To him the bear-tamer made the same proposition, to which the chief readily agreed, thinking that his child would be only too glad to fly to his arms.

"You agree to the bargain. No back-down," inquired Old Grizzly.

"Big Hand has spoken. His tongue is not forked and it can not lie," was the laconic response.

"Fetch out the gal an' the woman," said the bear-tamer, taking his rifle. He had no intention of allowing any treachery.

In a few moments Silver Tongue and her mother appeared.

When the former beheld her adopted father, of whom she was very fond, she ran forward and clasped her arms round his brawny neck.

"Ugh!" said the Indian, while his face gleamed with pleasure.

"Hold on, old ha'r-lifter, an' see it out. Ax her to go home," cried Old Grizzly.

"The lodge of the chief is dark, without his child. She will come and bring back the sunshine," he said, interrogatively.

The change in the manner of the young girl, from joy to apparently the deepest sorrow, was instantaneous. Without a word she unwound her arms, kissed the chief's forehead, and turning, walked back to her mother's side and took her hand.

The whole action was so replete with meaning that no further demand was made.

Old Grizzly stepped forward and explained the state of affairs to the sorrowing chief. He knew it to be true, and, without any effort at persuading, or even speaking to Silver Tongue again, he pulled his blanket about his head, and followed by all the Indians, took his way back to the village.

CHAPTER XXV. THE NEW LIFE.—CONCLUSION.

A BEAUTIFUL, sunshiny day in early summer was closing over the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, when a party of four encamped upon a small stream where a dense grove of timber afforded them shelter, while a rich carpet of grass gave ample food to the horses that they had been riding.

The party were Richard Hammond, known to our readers as the Red Avenger; Rosa Hammond, the Wild Huntress; her recovered daughter, Agnes; and Alfred Badger, the accepted lover of the young girl.

Some days previous they had parted from Old Grizzly and Leaping Elk, and were now journeying toward California, where they proposed making their home.

It was a hard struggle for Alfred to part from his old friend and companion in many a dangerous adventure, but love proved stronger than friendship, and so he followed the maiden and left the friend.

But he had left the bear-tamer under favorable auspices.

The day following the visit of the Blackfeet, a grand council had been held, to which the whites were invited.

Here a treaty of peace between Old Grizzly and the Indians had been entered into, by which the former was assured of their friendship, so long as he remained friendly to them.

Silver Tongue was present, and the parting between her and her father was most affecting, though the old warrior tried hard to conceal his emotion. The young girl had been greatly loved by all the tribe, and when she mounted the white horse to ride back to the bear-camp, she found three others standing by—a gift from the tribe.

Not only this, but many valuable furs, ornaments, etc., had been contributed, so that she would not have to go to the altar a dowryless bride.

By consent of his father, Leaping Elk was to take up his abode with the "Great Medicine of the Bears," so Old Grizzly was not left entirely alone.

The journey to California was not made without many hardships and much danger, but the little party at length arrived at San Francisco. In saying here Alfred and Agnes Hammond were married, and the following summer the same ceremony was performed for Richard Hammond and Rosa—the Wild Huntress of the Hills.

THE END.

Drawing Lots. A RECOLLECTION.

BY WALTER A. ROSE.

A SMALL boat, a mere shallop, lying motionless upon the unrippled, silvery surface of a tropical sea, hundreds of miles away from the nearest land. In it seven persons; two women, one a matron well advanced in years, the other a pretty maiden, scarce seventeen; four gaunt, sun-bronzed, weather-beaten seamen, a pale, sickly-looking lad and myself, the officer in command of the gig of the luckless brig Bonita, lately foundered in mid-ocean.

There is a weird, wild expression on all our faces; our eyes are brilliant, but our hearts are dull. Now and then the white glitter of a sea-bird's wing, seen from a distance looking like a sail, sends our night-stagnant blood pulsing to our hearts, only to again recede and leave us even without hope. Barely two months have passed since we sailed from Boston in the bonny brig that now lies buried in weeds, surrounded with hideous monsters of the deep, far under the sulphureous roof of the sea-god's home. Then our hearts were light and our spirits buoyant, for we were a jovial crew and were bound for a sunny clime, where Nature has strewn her bounteous gifts with lavish hands; now, famishing and athirst, scorched by the fierce noontide heats, we have almost ceased to pray for succor, but implore the angel of death to mercifully release us from our sufferings.

The brig started a plank and foundered so suddenly, during the middle-watch at night, that there was only time to lower and man the gig, after placing the captain's wife and niece in her. The skipper went down with his craft, three of the crew, also, being sucked in the vortex; but the remainder of us had saved ourselves. Saved! no! only clung to life with that tenacity which is inherent in the nature of every mortal; sought prolonged agony, rather than welcome the grim physician, death, when he first offered to us his balsam of oblivion. Now we call upon him, but he mocks our pain; he will not bestow the blessed boon on those who at first refused it.

We are suffering the miseries of the damned—the gnawing agony of starvation, the terrible torture of thirst. When the Bonita passed from our gaze and left us desolate, all the store of provisions in the little gig consisted of a small two-gallon breaker of water and forty-two hard cracker biscuits.

We have been eight days drifting listlessly about, without a breath of wind to fill our tiny sail, or waft some vessel to our aid. For the first five days I, being in command, carefully divided out to each person his diurnal share of our little stock. Though this was only one biscuit and about a wine glass full of water apiece, on the sixth day I found it necessary to curtail it. I reduced the allowance by exactly one-half; when I have delivered to-day's rations neither bit nor sup will remain!

"Comrades!" I have divided it fairly, you know; now we can only hope, and pray, and die."

"Ay, ay, sir! God's will be done!" is the hoarse, guttural response chorused.

"Mr. Hale, I think my aunt is dying."

It is Minnie Everett, the late captain's niece, naturally a sweet, rosy-cheeked girl, but now emaciated and worn, who whispers these words into my ear. I turn to Mrs. Marvin, who is lying in the stern-sheets, her head supported in poor Minnie's lap. Her eyes look luster; a firm o'erspreads them; she is gasping for breath; the beating of her pulse is scarcely perceptible. I sprinkle her brow with sea-water. She tries to speak, but can not articulate. Another spasmodic gasp, her jaws relax, and her spirit wings its flight to another sphere.

"She is happier now, Minnie."

It is all the comfort I can give the bereaved girl. She thanks me with her eyes, and lays her head, with its fleecy of golden locks, upon the pulseless breast of the departed. The fountains of her heart are dry; tears will not flow, she can only groan her anguish.

"Better bury the poor missus, sir. Luck won't come while there's a corpse aboard," muttered trusty Jack Hammill, half an hour later.

I glanced in his face, and read his meaning there. The hint at superstition is but an excuse for his fellows. Famished, ravenous men are anthropophagites.

"Minnie, bear up, dear!" I address her as though she was my child—"I must inter your grief."

"Not yet; oh, please—not yet!" she pleads.

I give her another hour with the earthly remains of the deceased, and then renew my application. God! it is that fearful glare in my eyes? Minnie starts back appalled, but does not longer demur. Unshrouded, we commit the body to the deep.

Another cloudless night, another torrid day, no breeze, no food, no hope! Much murmuring now among the men; they are but human, and their sufferings are intense.

"Stave in the boat, and let us die at once!" cries the little cabin-boy.

But his comrades are past the suicidal epoch; the love of life with them is strong, indeed.

"If you want to die so bad, why not do it to save us?" says one.

It is what I have been fearing for hours. This secret craving has at length found voice. Each dreaded to advance the proposal until the unhappy lad's words broke the ice. Now they all take it up, and the dreadful desire for food of any kind has stifled all other feelings in their hearts.

The lad is cowed now—he could face death with his comrades; but the thought of his body providing food for his fellow-men is too horrible. I see his danger, for a weapon gleams in the sunlight. I reach forward to seize the glittering blade, but I can not parry the blow. With a cry, the boy falls across the gunwale, stabbed to the heart!

Like a pack of hungry vampires, the seamen strive to suck the wound from which the youth's warm life-blood wells up; but, dreading its effect on them—knowing it will madden their brains—I suddenly tip the corpse overboard, and it sinks from our gaze. A torrent of imprecations are rained upon my head, and threats are uttered against me.

"He ought to die himself for doing that. What would it have mattered to the boy?" growls one.

I know the peril menacing me. I fear it only for Minnie's sake. I love the orphan girl—have long adored her—though she is unaware of the feelings of my heart. I draw a small revolver and level it.

"Stand back, or die!" I cry.

The demoralized men sink upon the thwarts.

"The mate is right to protect himself; but he should not have robbed us of our food," mutters an attenuated wretch.

"One of us must die to save the rest; let us draw lots," says another.

"Agreed! that is but fair; then we all have a chance," choruses all three.

I see that it is useless to resist—I cut four rope-yarns in unequal lengths and hold them before me.

"Whoever plucks the shortest has to die," I say.

"Four! how is that? We are five in all," remonstrates my comrades.

"You still retain the outward semblance, if not the hearts, of men; you would not touch the girl?" I bitterly reply.

"She is one of us in this; each man has an extra chance for his life if she comes in." "Fiends! devils! I will take her turn; if the lot falls on her, I will die; but you will swear to protect her afterward?" I cry.

"We swear it! Be quick; you have delayed too long."

I place another yarn among those in my hand. Minnie raises her head.

"What are you doing, Mr. Hale? What is the matter?" she asks.

"I do not enlighten her; it is useless to do so—she will know too well soon. The chances are against me; my mind is made up; if the lot falls upon either the girl or myself, I will shoot myself through the heart."

Each man draws a yarn; ere the last fellow takes his, the most ravenous cries out: "Hold on, Sam! Let the girl draw before you and the mate take the remaining one."

"Why?" I ask.

"She'll taste better than your sun-dried carcass," is the brutal reply.

I do not remonstrate, knowing it would be futile to do so.

Minnie draws; she takes the shortest, leaving me the longest yarn.

"The girl dies! ha! ha!" vociferate these erstwhile men.

"I will die for her; give me but time to murmur a prayer."

"You shall not. She has lost; she took her chance!" Jack Hammill, formerly the truest man of the crew, shouts savagely.

He springs aft to seize the cowering girl, who now fully understands the fearful ordeal. I raise my weapon and shoot him through the breast. Instantly, like vultures sigtating carrion, his two comrades pounce upon him, and, with their knives, gash gaping wounds in his still quivering flesh, and suck the warm blood that exudes from them!

Minnie swoons; the sight is too terrible. I dash water upon her, but pray that she may not revive.

Tempted as I am, I will not taste the flesh of the man I shot. His comrades, however, regale themselves upon it, and try to stave their burning thirst with copious draughts of sea water. I know what is coming, and I wait.

In a few hours they are insane, grappling together in their paroxysms. I fear they will capsize the light boat. This is no time for maudlin sentiment. It is not for myself I do it, but for Minnie. I slay them both, and cast their bodies overboard.

It is night, and the cloudless dome of Heaven is spangled with lustrous stars. I fear I am going mad, for I see strange forms around me. The girl I love lies moaning heavily, happily unconscious, though still suffering. I am tempted to release her from the agony she endures.

"'Twould be mercy, I reason, not a crime. I creep toward her, locking my revolver as I do so. Ha! what is that? A thing of air, a phantom? No! Can it be—? I fire; a bird falls fluttering inboard.

Quickly I seize it and pluck the feathers from its breast. The orifice my ball has made I place to the mouth of the inanimate girl. Mechanically she sucks the warm blood that trickles from the wound. I tear the bird asunder and force its flesh into my darling's mouth.

She eats it, she will live, thank God!

My strength has given way, I am sinking fast. I can not see; but a halo seems to hang around me, a yellow mist, a golden fog. I can breathe freely now, and my sufferings are past. Can this be death? Has my soul left my body, and is it only that which is flitting about in this flood of aureous light? All feeling has left me; I am floating on saffron clouds!

A stinging sensation is upon me. My soul must be passing through other realms; and yet my body is in pain. Can it be possible that I am still alive? The golden mists are dispersing; will they unveil the crystal portals of paradise, or the dark dungeons of hell? Music, soft-voiced angels' whispers! I am favored; can it be that a place for one so vile has been reserved in the kingdom of heaven? Light is coming!

"Yes, miss, I think he'll live, if we nurse him carefully. It has been touch and go with him, though, and I can not yet understand how you, who are weaker, managed to sustain life at all."

"It was his self-abnegation that so nearly killed him; he shot a bird on the last night of our terrible trials; but he gave its flesh and blood to me, though he was suffering all the agonies of starvation and tortures of thirst."

Light comes, the voices bring it back! The golden veils are withdrawn. Bending over me is an angelic face—the face of her I love; yellow curls cluster and sweep over my brow.

"Minnie!"

"He knows me, doctor! Thank God, he will yet survive!"

"Darling!"

"Yes, Harry, yours, and yours only."

"Are we in heaven?"

"No, dearest, aboard the United States ship *Susquehanna*; she rescued us the day after you killed the bird."

"Do you love me, Minnie?"

"Would I kiss you like this if I did not, Harry?"

"Better let my patient remain as tranquil as possible, Miss Everett. He needs quiet now, and you will doubtless have ample opportunity in after years to be affectionate to each other."

"I hope so, doctor!"

And we have!

TO ADVERTISERS.

A few Advertisements will be inserted on this page at the rate of fifty cents per line, nonpareil measurement.

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NIGHT IN THE SIERRAS.

THE CAMP-FIRE.

BY E. W. DRUMMOND.

Red sank the sun that night afar,
Behind the snow-robed summit peak,
We saw uprising moon and star,
And heard the night-wind whirring weak;
While yet along each lonely night
Around whose sides long shadows vaunting
The day his lingering robes of light
Toward the dim wild west was trailing.

As twilight fell we heard the snail,
Away on whirling pinions sped,
To join his mate whose anxious call
Rings shrilly down the mountain wall.
And the low, deep drum note of the grouse,
Who never once his form would show,
But stirred uneasy to and fro,
In the chambers of his leafy house.
As night grew on the owl awoke,
And overhead the silence broke;
A gloomy misanthrope was he
Hooting there so drearily.
As though it grieved him there should be,
A day that dragged so wearily,
And when he ceased his solemn cries,
It was a kind of glad surprise
To hear the wild cat screaming near,
And growl for back-note of the deer,
To startled birds that high or low
Heard sly beneath the prowler go.

What cared we how the sun went down?
What cared we though the night without
Grew round us with a darker frown?
We sat our cheerful fire about,
And saw its bright rays round us fling,
Against clouding gloom its ruddy ring.
By its low embers hanging long,
Regaled with tale or cheered with song
That woke our boyhood's dreams again,
And touched the springs of joy or pain.
We saw the dark pines round us rise,
Like gloomy ghosts against the skies,
With here and there an arrow pine,
That seemed a shadowy threat to make
As in the faint night breeze it swung,
And with some ghostly passion shake.

Once faintly through the darkness came
A sound that all our pulses stirred,
And close around the dying flame,
With scarce a breath and never a word,
Each hand upon the ready gun,
Until the sound passed by and on;
We strained our eyes to pierce the gloom
The low-sung moon could not illumine,
For well we knew its grizzly passed
Through the chapparal that grew so near,
And for a space our hearts beat fast,
It may be with some touch of fear.

Ah, well! the eyes that watched are dim,
And the hearts that beat are pulseless now;
Save mine, who trembling on life's rim,
Look back and can but wonder how
The freshness of those hopeful days
Should gleam so far through darkened ways,
Soon let me on the mountain side
Lie down with those who have gone before;
Though fate did not our steps here,
And Fortune spurned us from her door;
Sweet, sweet shall be the dreamless rest
The minor buds on Nature's breast
Scoop on, ye proud! let anthems rise
When marble shrines the favored dead,
Ours shall be Nature's ministrations,
And high above each lonely bed
The solemn pines to heaven reach,
With gesture more than mortal speech.

\$20,000 Reward.

A TALE OF THE CRESCENT CITY.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

The evening shades that heralded the close of a sultry August day, fell upon a repulsive-looking man in one of the dingiest thoroughfares of New Orleans, in the marauding days of La Fitte.

His dress proclaimed him a sailor, and his features a pirate.

He stood before a dingy stone building, upon the wall of which was posted the following advertisement, which, with scarcely any education, he was trying to master:

"STOLEN.—\$20,000 REWARD."

"On the night of the Twentieth of October, Huldah, the little daughter of Jared Ellsworth, banker, was stolen from her chamber by some person or persons unknown to her parents. She was a bright little child, nine years of age, delicately built, and possessed long auburn hair and bright-blue eyes. The motive that led to the abduction is unknown, and hereby offer a reward of twenty thousand dollars in gold for her return."

"JARED ELLSWORTH, BANKER."

"Twenty thousand dollars in gold!" muttered the man, proceeding to read the placard. "With that sum in my wallet I'd leave the sea, and settle down in this city; and, if I do not leave the water mighty soon, it's going to become Tom Roper's great coffin, that's what's the matter."

He paused to transfer some tobacco from an elegant box to his hairy mouth, and proceeded, as he drew nearer the advertisement, for the deeper shadows were rendering the letters indistinguishable.

"On the night of the Twentieth of October, it says. Now, I happen to know a thing or two about that particular night, I do. We lay out yonder in the water, and I rowed Captain Torroque to the city, and waited at the wharf for him till midnight. Now, what was he doing alone in the city? I never knew him to cut such a caper before. He always took a couple of us with him, because he always got into some bloody scrap. Well, about midnight here he came back to the boat, and I saw a smile on his lips, in the light of the moon. He peered uncommon jovial about something, while we returned to the ship, and when he thought I wasn't listening, I heard him say that they—which meant somebody—would give fifty thousand for her—which meant something, too. I never thought any thing of that expression since until this minute, and I believe that the captain stole—what's her name?—Huldah Ellsworth."

Having arrived at this conclusion, the speaker deposited a mouthful of tobacco juice upon the dilapidated pavement, drew his great hat over his eyes, and walked toward the wharf.

At the foot of the worm-eaten pier he entered a boat, where he was presently joined by two men, as repulsive as himself, and after an exchange of words the trio pulled toward a rakish-looking vessel that lay out in the bay.

As they stepped upon the deck of the piratical craft, a tall and dark-featured man approached them, and inquired of one—not Tom Roper—how things went in the city.

"Excitement prevails in certain quarters," was the reply. "The daughter of a rich banker has been missing for some time—since the twentieth of last October, I believe—and placards, offering a large reward for her recovery, are posted over the entire city."

"Ah!" ejaculated the questioner, who was none other than Torroque Torroque, a bloodier pirate than his contemporary, La Fitte, and the scourge of the Gulf. "Why did you not obtain one of those placards?"

"I did, captain," answered the sailor, and he drew a roll of heavy paper from his bosom.

The pirate seized it, and glanced at its contents in the light of the lamp that hung in the bow of the craft.

"Only twenty thousand dollars!" he sneered, crushing the paper in his hand.

somely-gloved hand. "When Jared Ellsworth adds thirty thousand to it he may begin to look for his child," and with this he walked from the men and disappeared below.

"By the storms of Neptune! I was right," muttered Tom Roper, in an undertone. "And I'm going to work mighty hard for that yellow pile."

He had scarcely finished when Torroque reappeared on deck, enveloped in a black cloak.

He approached Roper—the most thorough sailor on the ship—and requested to be rowed to the city. The pirate did not note the flash of the greedy sailor's dark eyes, and a minute later they were breasting the waves in a little boat.

When the frail boat struck the pier, the pirate debarked, and in low tones, commanded Roper to await his return. The sailor promised obedience; but no sooner was Torroque's back turned, than he followed him.

The Scourge of the Gulf led his sailor a weary chase; but, at last, Tom was rewarded by seeing him enter a forbidden house, in the Spanish quarter of the city. For an hour, Roper tried to peep beyond the walls, but in vain. The interior of the structure was a sealed book to him, and at length, but not disheartened, he turned away and re-sought the boat.

An hour later Torroque returned, and in silence Tom pulled for the ship.

When the boat struck the vessel's side, the pirate gained the deck with an agility unknown to Tom, who presently rose to follow.

"Traitor!" cried Torroque, bending over the taffrail, with a pistol in his hand, "you have dared to spy the movements of your chief; and thus I punish unfaithful dogs!"

A bright flash illumined the waves, and with a shriek, Tom Roper fell headlong from the boat.

Satisfied with the result of his shot, the Spaniard sheathed the smoking pistol in his bosom, and sought a pirate's couch and a pirate's dreams.

When morning broke upon the waves, Tom Roper's body was not to be seen, and the boat was just discernible, drifting afar out to sea.

Thus had perished a pirate's golden dreams.

At least Torroque thought thus.

At the period of which I write the cholera

wan features told that the cholera was doing its horrible work unmoled.

"Where's the doctor?" cried Roper, looking up at the woman.

"She never had one," was the reply. Such inhumanity shocked the pirate.

"She's nearly dead, but may be saved," he said. "I'll try."

Approaching footsteps in the corridor broke the sentence. The sailor turned, and the light revealed Torroque Torroque.

With an oath, the Spaniard dashed forward; but a ball from Roper's pistol stretched him dead across the threshold.

"There's a reward of ten thousand dollars for Torroque Torroque, dead or alive," he said, quietly, turning to the woman. "He thought I was dead. He shot me last night; but the ball merely grazed my temple, and when I recovered I easily swam to the city."

Half an hour later a physician stood over little Huldah Ellsworth, and, despite the progress the disease had made, she recovered.

When Tom Roper witnessed her reception by her bereaved parents, he refused to accept the large reward offered for her recovery; but took that offered for the pirate chief, and left the Crescent City, with more than one of Torroque's avenging followers upon his track.

But he baffled them, and ultimately died a natural death in Baltimore.

Shortly after Huldah's restoration, her sister, released from her vow, wedded the man of her choice, and nine years later, the beautiful belle of New Orleans—Huldah Ellsworth—was united to a man upon whom our nation has conferred great honors.

Recollections of the West.

Heading off a War-Party.

BY CAPT. BEVIN ADAMS.

Long ago Austin, the present capital of Texas, had become to be quite a "city," it was, at times, subjected to lying visits from the Comanches, whose country lay to the west and north-westward, and, on more than one occasion, men and women were stricken down in the very heart of the town, or else carried off to a captivity that was far worse

come to celebrate—the only child of their host!

In less than half an hour the rangers were in the saddle, and, after a brief consultation, and a few words of hope from their officer to the bereaved father, they were away on the trail of the marauding savages like a whirlwind. At daylight a close inspection of the "sign" left by the savages revealed their number to be about equal to that of the pursuing party, and as odds of two or three to one were considered as not too great, the rangers pressed forward, certain of victory if they could but get within striking distance.

Among the rangers were some of the best mountain and prairie-men on the border—men who knew every inch of the country over which they were moving, and who thoroughly understood the wiles and devices of Indian warfare.

The trail was leading due west, and so continued until it crossed the west fork of the Pedernales, but from thence it swerved gradually to the north-west.

"Horse-head Crossing," exclaimed one of the older scouts, and, without further parley, they left the trail, turned slightly to the left, skirting the southern foot of the long range of hills, and rode, with loose reins, direct for the well-known ford.

By noon of the day following, the dark line along the western horizon showed they were approaching the Rio Pecos. It was the timber skirting the river. It now became necessary to ascertain if the Indians had yet come up and crossed.

Bending a little to the southward, so as to strike the timber at a point some distance below the crossing, they reached the timber without having discovered any signs of those they were in pursuit of.

Hardly, however, had the last man gotten safely under cover, before an exclamation was heard from one of the rangers, and following the direction indicated by his outstretched arm, they looked eastward across the level prairie.

Far off, just upon the verge of the horizon, a number of small, dark objects were discerned, which grew rapidly in size, moving up and down with a regular motion, as they advanced.

They were the Comanche warriors, and the peculiar motion was caused by the "lope" of their mustangs, a gait in which a plain Indian always rides.

Then ensued a wild dash through the

BIG INJUN OVER THE RHINE

BY THE "PAT CONTRIBUTOR."

A. Injun sat in a garden
Drinking lager beer,
He had left his wigwag on the plains,
And his squaw she wasn't near.
But a Dutch girl stood beside him
To hear what he should say,
And replied to his Injun jargon,
"Nix kum harrus unt nix ver stay!"

This beery Injun blubbered
As he took that Dutch girl's hand,
And said, "Me never more shall see
Me own, me native land,
Bear some message and a scalp or two
To those distant friends of mine,
For I am a big Injun—
Big Injun over the Rhine."

"Go tell my brother warriors
As they sit the camp-fire round—
And listen to my story,
All squatting on the ground,
That I drank my lager bravely
From mom till set of sun,
Beat the Dutch at their own game—
Beat every mother's son."

For sprawled among the empty kegs
Were some grown old on beer—
Injun never tasted none
Until he first cavorted here.

"Mid all that throng not one can say
He e'er heard me decline—
I tell you I'm big Injun—
Big Injun over the Rhine!"

"Tell my mother that her other sons
Shall comfort her old age,
Chase the buffalo scalp the driver
Of the overland mail stage.
For my father was a warrior bold,
And e'en as a pauper
I joy'd to know that the old man
Was sound upon the loope."

And when he died and left us
To divide his scanty board,
I let them take what they would
But kept my father's—good—
Then took and fill it high with beer,
Let's see the lager water here,
Gross glass for the big Injun—
Big Injun over the Rhine."

"Tell my sister not to whimper
Because she misses one
When the Injun delegation
Comes back from Washington;
But gaze upon them proudly,
And never shed a tear,
Her brother's the only Injun
As ain't afraid of beer."

And if some brave boy should seek
Then it would please me much,
If mingled with his Injun blood
Was just a shade of two brothers,
I'd drink his health in this old gourd—
My father's gourd and mine—
To the honor of Big Injun,
Big Injun over the Rhine."

His voice grew faint and hoarse;
His legs seemed limp and weak;
He beckoned feebly with his gourd,
Hi-cupped, and ceased to speak.
A policeman bent to lift him—
The task it wasn't light—
The savage from beyond the Plains
Lay 'cross the table tight!"

And the soft moon rose up slowly,
As the lights seemed to be growing lower,
And the loud tonic music
Was drowned in the red man's snore.
He fell early in the battle,
Twas only half-past nine—
This beery, beery Injun,
Big Injun over the Rhine."

Short Stories from History.

The Value of Integrity.—Alexander the Great has so often been represented as a ruthless destroyer that we are apt to overlook the qualities which attach to all true greatness—a love for honor in others. His history is full of instances, showing how the conqueror respected virtue and courage. Here is one:

When Alexander the Great deposed Strato, the King of Sidon, he bade his favorite, Hephestion, give the crown to any of the Sidonians he should deem worthy of so exalted a station. Hephestion was at this time living at the house of two brothers, who were young, and descended from the best family in the city. To these he offered the crown, but they declined to accept it, telling him that, according to the laws of their country, no person could ascend the throne unless he were of the blood royal.

Hephestion, pleased with such disinterestedness, requested that they would name some person of the royal family who might remember when he was king, that it was they who had placed the crown on his head. The brothers had observed that several persons, through ambition, had aspired to this distinguished rank, and to obtain it had paid servile court to Alexander's favorites. Disregarding, however, all the advantages which the power of nominating to a throne gave them, they declared that they did not know any person more worthy of the diadem than one Abdalomus, who was descended, though remotely, from the royal line, but who, at the same time, was so poor that he was obliged to get his bread by daily labor in a garden without the city; his honesty and integrity having made him disregard many advantageous offers, and reduced him to his extreme poverty.

Hephestion, trusting to their choice, the two brothers went in search of Abdalomus with the royal garments, and found him weeding his garden. They saluted him king, and one of them addressing him, said: "You must now change your tatters for the dress I have brought you. Put off the mean and contemptible habit in which you have grown old. Assume the garments of a prince; but when you are seated on the throne, continue to preserve the virtue which made you worthy of it. And when you shall have ascended it, and by that means become the supreme dispenser of life and death over all your citizens, be sure never to forget the condition in which, or rather for which, you were elected."

Abdalomus looked upon the whole as a dream, and unable to guess the meaning of it, asked if they were not ashamed to ridicule him in that manner? But, as he made a greater resistance than suited their inclinations, they themselves washed him, and threw over his shoulders a purple robe, richly embroidered with gold; then, after repeated oaths of their being in earnest, they conducted him to the palace. The news of this was immediately spread over the whole city. Most of the inhabitants were overjoyed at it; but some murmured especially the rich, who, despising Abdalomus' former subject state, could not forbear showing their resentment in the king's court. Alexander commanded the newly-elected prince to be sent for; and after surveying him attentively a long while, spoke thus: "Thy air and mien do not contradict what is related of thy extraction; but I should be glad to know with what frame of mind thou didst bear thy poverty."

"Would to the gods," replied he, "that I may bear this crown with equal patience. These hands have procured me all I desired; and while I possessed nothing, I wanted nothing." This answer gave Alexander a high idea of Abdalomus' virtue; so that he presented him not only with all the rich furniture which had belonged to Strato, and part of the Persian plunder, but likewise annexed one of the neighboring provinces to his dominions.



\$20,000 REWARD.